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ABSTRACT

The JOBSTART demonstration was carried out between August 1985 and October 1986 to gain information on effective ways to solve the problem of high unemployment rates and low skills levels of many high school dropouts. JOBSTART was targeted to disadvantaged high school dropouts, and provided them with basic educational and occupational skills training, combined with support services and assistance in finding an unsubsidized job. The program was carried out at 16 sites and funded in part through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). This report evaluates the program and its effectiveness. It contains the following: (1) an introduction; (2) a description of how the JOBSTART demonstration was incorporated into the JTPA system; (3) an overview of the JOBSTART sites; (4) JTPA policies at the local level and implementation of JOBSTART; (5) information on recruitment and enrollment; and (6) an appendix consisting of profiles of the 16 sites. A list of references is included. It was found that the following operational challenges still face JOBSTART: (1) overcoming the difficulties associated with recruiting young high school dropouts in order to meet the enrollment targets; (2) ensuring that the youths remain in training for the intended duration; (3) successfully placing them in jobs; and (4) moving youths through the educational component in a timely manner and meeting the entry requirements of skills training courses. (PS)

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LAUNCHING JOBSTART

A Demonstration for Dropouts in the JTPA System

Patricia Auspos
with
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January 1987

Manpower Demonstration
Research Corporation

MDRC

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Mounting the JOBSTART demonstration required the perseverance and dedication of a large number of individuals over a lengthy period of time. Appreciation is extended to all those who helped make this ambitious project a reality, from its conception through its implementation.

In a limited funding environment such as that existing today, the availability of research funds to do rigorous evaluations is particularly important. Gratitude is expressed to the numerous foundation, corporate, and agency sponsors that are supporting the research and providing some of the operating funds at the JOBSTART sites.

The administrators and staffs of the JOBSTART sites deserve special credit for their willingness to participate in the demonstration and to accommodate the demands of the research design. The fact that they have chosen to do so is a tribute to their vision, their professionalism and their commitment to providing quality services to disadvantaged persons.

The JOBSTART demonstration would also not have been possible without the cooperation and financial assistance of state and local staffs responsible for administering programs authorized by the Job Training Partnership Act. They should be commended for their foresight and interest in supporting innovative strategies especially since, as this report illustrates, launching the demonstration was no simple task in the current environment.

The preparation of this report involved hours of interviews with many staff members at the JOBSTART sites and with local and state JTPA officials. The authors are grateful for the time they gave us, their forthrightness in answering our questions, and their patience in explaining the intricacies of the JTPA system. The analysis benefited from their insights and knowledge of these issues.

A number of individuals at MDRC also deserve special mention. Robert Ivry has been the guiding force behind JOBSTART for several years; without his vision, energy and fund-raising abilities, the demonstration would not have been implemented at the same scale. The operations staff -- Milton Little, Marilyn Price, John Morgan and Kay Sardo -- were unflagging in their efforts to identify and develop potential sites. Their knowledge of the JOBSTART sites and the JTPA environment is reflected throughout this report.

The report also benefited from the insightful review of Judith Gueron, Michael Bangser, Barbara Goldman and John Wallace. In addition, many of the themes were initially identified by the late Joseph Ball. The instrumental role of the Youth Subcommittee of the MDRC Board of Directors is also acknowledged with gratitude. Karen Paget and Patti Anderson oversaw the design of the JOBSTART management information system. Sheila Mandel and Miriam Rabban edited the manuscript with their usual grace, and Gregory Hoerz and Naomi Weinstein were responsible for programming the data.

The Authors

PREFACE

In recent years, there has been widespread concern about the personal and social costs of the high unemployment rates and low skills levels of many high-school dropouts. Unfortunately, there is limited information available to policymakers on solutions of demonstrated effectiveness.

Several years ago, the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) began to develop an unusual project, the JOBSTART demonstration, designed to provide some of that information. The project operates within the nation's employment and training system authorized by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). It is targeted to notably disadvantaged high-school dropouts, and provides them with basic educational and occupational skills training, combined with support services and assistance in finding an unsubsidized job. The program approach drew extensively from the Job Corps and from the lessons of previous evaluations and operational experience.

To obtain reliable answers on whether this approach is effective, JOBSTART uses a research design of particular rigor, in which eligible program applicants are assigned at random either to participate in the program or to a control group. By comparing the two groups' behavior over time, the JOBSTART evaluation will be able to provide reliable information about whether program participation leads to changes in employment and earnings, welfare dependency, and other measured activities.

MDRC, a private, nonprofit corporation experienced in designing, managing and evaluating innovative programs, has overall responsibility for the management of this demonstration and its extensive evaluation. This report is the first in a series planned for the JOBSTART evaluation. It describes the development of the program model, the site selection process, the relationship between JOBSTART and the JTPA system, and the first few months of recruitment at early-starting sites.

In the past, most comparable, large-scale research and demonstration projects have been funded primarily by the federal government and have usually provided program operators with a major part of the resources needed to operate the model. The JOBSTART demonstration has neither of these advantages, and its successful implementation to date is testimony to the commitment of funders and site operators across the country.

An unusual consortium of 11 funders is supporting this evaluation and the dissemination of lessons and providing a very small proportion of the local operating costs. The funders include private foundations, corporations, a federal agency and a national organization. The willingness of so many different partners to fund a five-year research and demonstration effort shows a shared recognition of the importance of the problem and commitment to testing, finding answers, and serving the disadvantaged.

The program operators and their state and local funding agencies deserve special credit for agreeing to participate in a project which imposes certain short-term burdens in exchange for more uncertain, future larger social benefits. Our continued ability to answer the difficult questions of social policy research depends on the cooperation of such far-sighted program administrators.

Judith M. Gueron
President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The JOBSTART demonstration is significant from three different policy perspectives: as a program model targeted to poor, young high-school dropouts who face many barriers to employment; as a social experiment that tests that program model with a random assignment design; and as a demonstration operated within the nation's employment and training system for economically disadvantaged persons authorized by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

The program model being tested in JOBSTART combines instruction in basic education with occupational skills training and also provides support services and job placement assistance. In addition to being economically disadvantaged, enrollees are required to be high-school dropouts and, in most cases, to read below the eighth-grade level on standardized tests.

A total of 16 sites -- all of them funded in part through the JTPA system -- began participating in the JOBSTART demonstration between August 1985 and October 1986. The demonstration was developed and is being managed and evaluated by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a nonprofit organization with over a decade of experience in designing, overseeing and evaluating programs seeking to help disadvantaged persons achieve self-sufficiency.

A. Policy Significance of JOBSTART

MDRC's decision to launch a demonstration to serve high-school dropouts was a response to three primary concerns.

- **First, a growing body of literature suggests that dropping out of school has long-term harmful effects on the individual as well as on society.**

Increasingly, chronic joblessness among all youths is recognized to be concentrated primarily in a relatively small segment of the teenage population: youths who have dropped out of high school, many of whom come from poor, minority families. Lacking the basic education and work skills required for most entry-level jobs, these young people are at a particular disadvantage in the labor market. The joblessness rate for black high-school dropouts, for example, was as high as 73 percent in March 1985.

This situation is particularly serious because, as suggested by prior studies, the employment problems of this group will not be solved by a general improvement in the economy, nor by the natural aging of the youth population, nor by a contraction in the size of the teenage population. For society, this entails losses in productivity as well as the higher costs associated with greater welfare dependency and potentially higher rates of drug abuse and crime.

- **Second, despite a growing awareness of the correlation between educational disadvantage and chronic joblessness, it appears that the most-at-risk groups of youths are not being adequately served by the JTPA system.**

The Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 offers a major opportunity to provide training to disadvantaged youths by mandating that 40 percent of the funds allocated to local service delivery areas (SDAs) be spent on youths under the age of 22 and that dropouts be served in proportion to their representation in the eligible population. However, early studies of the JTPA system indicated that most areas failed to meet the expenditure requirement for youths and the service ratio for dropouts. At issue is whether attempts to improve the quality and accountability of the JTPA system have, in somewhat perverse fashion, made it more difficult to serve educationally disadvantaged persons who will need longer and more expensive training to enter the workforce. Despite some recent changes, concern persists that program operators are encouraged to serve people most likely to succeed rather than those most in need.

Because the JOBSTART program was planned to be operated within the JTPA system, using JTPA funding and subject to JTPA regulations and performance standards, the demonstration serves as a test of the ways in which JTPA policies and practices can hinder or facilitate service delivery to a key -- and very disadvantaged -- segment of the youth population. The JOBSTART evaluation provides a rare opportunity to understand the workings of the JTPA system through the prism of a single program, taking into account the operator's point of view as well as the perspective of local JTPA officials.

- **Third, the evaluation record on previous youth training programs leaves many questions unanswered about what works for the dropout population.**

Analysis of the evaluation record on youth programs indicates that many questions about effective services remain open because few programs were evaluated with a rigorous design using random assignment to create a control group, and some had difficulty in implementing the program model as intended. The Job Corps -- one of the few programs for school dropouts considered effective -- combines intensive remediation and skills training in a residential setting. A question left unanswered by evaluation of the Job Corps is whether a similar mix of services offered in a non-residential setting can produce comparable results and do so at a lower operating cost.

If JOBSTART is proven effective, both the Job Corps and JOBSTART will represent viable program options for helping disadvantaged school dropouts become self-sufficient.

B. The JOBSTART Program and Its Evaluation

1. The Program Model

- **As indicated in Table 1, JOBSTART is designed to provide comprehensive services, including at least 200 hours of instruction in basic education, 500 hours of skills training, job placement assistance and intensive support services. Sites are encouraged, but not required, to use computer-assisted instruction in the education component.**

The program model -- which draws extensively from the Job Corps design -- represents the lessons from past research adapted to the current operational environment. For example, the evaluation record suggests that a model worth testing for high-school dropouts would combine either work experience or occupational skills training with remedial or basic education and that the intervention should be long and intense. However, current restrictions on work experience in the JTPA legislation indicated that classroom training would be the more viable approach. Similarly, information on the average length of training in JTPA programs made it seem unrealistic to impose a minimum of a year of training in JOBSTART, as MDRC would have liked. Instead, sites are required to provide at least 700 hours of training, but encouraged to provide more.

Apart from these basic guidelines, sites have been given considerable latitude in designing the content of the four JOBSTART components. Flexibility was extended for two reasons. First, evaluation studies have provided little guidance on whether one mode of service delivery is more

TABLE 1

THE JOBSTART PROGRAM MODEL

Target Population	To be eligible for JOBSTART, individuals must be: - 17 to 21 years old - high school dropouts without a diploma or GED - reading below the eighth grade level on a standardized test - economically disadvantaged, as defined by the Job Training Partnership Act
Basic Education Instruction	Sites will implement a curriculum that is: - self-paced and competency-based - computer-managed and -assisted, if possible - a minimum of 200 hours in length - focused on reading, communication and basic computation skills
Occupational Skills Training	Sites will implement a curriculum that: - is in a classroom setting - combines theory and hands-on experience - prepares enrollees for jobs in high-demand occupations - provides at least 500 hours of training - has been developed with the assistance of the private sector to ensure that graduates will meet the entry-level requirements of local employers
Training-Related Support Services	Services should be tailored to individual need and should include, in addition to transportation and child care, some combination of the following: - work readiness and life skills training - personal and vocational counseling, mentoring, tutorial assistance, referral to external support systems - needs-based payments or incentive payments tied to length of stay, program attendance or performance
Job Development and Placement Assistance	JOBSTART operators and/or their subcontractors will be responsible for assisting participants in finding training-related jobs

effective than another. Second, the fact that sites had to build JOBSTART into existing programs imposed practical limits on how much change they could be asked to make. A more prescriptive model would reduce the pool of potential sites, as well as limit the replicability of the model.

2. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the JOBSTART demonstration has three parts. The impact analysis will examine the program's effects on employment, earnings and welfare dependency, as well as on childbearing patterns, educational achievements, and criminal activity for two years after program entry. To do this, eligible youths who apply for JOBSTART are randomly assigned to either an experimental group eligible for JOBSTART services or a control group that is not; the outcomes for the two groups will be compared. Each site is expected to randomly assign a minimum of 200 youths: 100 to the experimental and 100 to the control group. As noted above, the findings of many previous studies of employment programs have been called into question because they lacked a random assignment design; JOBSTART represents one of the first evaluations of this type in the JTPA system.

The benefit-cost analysis will identify the costs of operating JOBSTART and determine whether the benefits derived from the program exceed or fall short of its costs -- that is, whether the program is cost-effective. The implementation analysis will describe the services offered at the JOBSTART sites, the patterns of participation and program departure, and the institutional arrangements and other factors that facilitated or hindered service delivery. The implementation analysis will be completed in late 1988; the impact and benefit-cost studies will be released in mid-1990.

This report, written while the demonstration was still in its start-up phase, focuses on the development of the program model, the site selection process, the relationship between JOBSTART and the JTPA system, and the first few months of recruitment at early-starting sites. The primary questions addressed are:

- **How have the operational constraints of the JTPA system affected the program design and evaluation strategy for the demonstration?**
- **To what degree did JTPA funding restrictions, contracting procedures and performance standards facilitate or constrain interest in the demonstration among program operators and JTPA agencies? How are they likely to affect program operations once sites are up and running?**
- **What kinds of changes did sites make in their existing programs and enrollment patterns in order to conform to the JOBSTART program model?**
- **How much variation is there across the JOBSTART sites in types of service providers, prior experience and service mix?**
- **How have the above factors affected the research design?**
- **What are the emerging patterns in recruitment and what factors appear to be influencing those patterns?**

Funding for the JOBSTART evaluation is being provided by an unusual consortium of 11 private foundations, corporations, a federal agency and a national organization. A very small proportion of the local costs of operating JOBSTART programs is also covered by contributions from such corporations and foundations. JTPA monies provide the bulk of local operating funds, although most JOBSTART programs also rely on other public or private sources.

C. Findings on Jobstart Sites and Early Operational Experience

- **The process of site selection and development was both**

time-consuming and labor-intensive.

MDRC worked with public interest groups in the employment, training and education fields as well as with state and local contacts to identify potential sites. In all, over 70 program operators discussed participation with MDRC staff. The length of time required to identify and develop a site for the JOBSTART demonstration varied from six months to over a year. In a number of cases, this process was slow because sites experienced difficulty in identifying additional funding sources or were subject to delays in the allocation of funding. In others, protracted negotiations over the services available to members of the control group lengthened the development period. Sites phased into the demonstration over a period of 15 months, between August 1985 and October 1986. (See Table 2.)

- **The 16 sites that began participating in the JOBSTART demonstration represent a mix of institutions: seven are community-based organizations, five are schools (both community colleges and adult vocational schools), and four are the non-residential components of Job Corps Centers.**[1]

The variety of institutions that are operating JOBSTART gives MDRC the opportunity to understand more about the strengths and weaknesses of operating the program model under different institutional arrangements, and to study the types of adaptations that must be made by different organizations to run such a program.

- **All the sites provided evidence of effective management, quality programming and financial stability. However, they**

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[1] As of January 1987, 15 sites remain in the JOBSTART demonstration. Stanly Technical College, located in Albemarle, North Carolina, is no longer part of the demonstration, largely due to difficulty in recruiting the required number of youths in a rural environment.

TABLE 2

THE JOBSTART SITES AND START OF RANDOM ASSIGNMENT

Agency Name	Location	JTPA Service Delivery Area	Random Assignment Start
Allentown Youth Services Consortium	Buffalo, NY	Buffalo/Cheektowaga/Tonawanda Consortium	June 1986
Atlanta Job Corps	Atlanta, GA	N/A	August 1986
Basic Skills Academy (BSA)	New York, NY	New York City	October 1986
Center for Employment Training (CET)	San Jose, CA	Santa Clara County	November 1985
Chicago Commons Association Business and Industrial Training Program	Chicago, IL	City of Chicago	March 1986
Connelley Skill Learning Center	Pittsburgh, PA	City of Pittsburgh	August 1985
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)	Hartford, CT	Hartford	April 1986
East Los Angeles Skill Center	Los Angeles, CA	City of Los Angeles	May 1986
El Centro Community College Job Training Center	Dallas, TX	City of Dallas	March 1986
Emily Griffith Opportunity School (EGOS)	Denver, CO	City and County of Denver	April 1986
Los Angeles Job Corps	Los Angeles, CA	N/A	August 1986
Phoenix Job Corps	Phoenix, AZ	N/A	June 1986
Sacramento Job Corps	Sacramento, CA	N/A	October 1986
SER - Jobs for Progress	Corpus Christi, TX	City of Corpus Christi/Nueces County	October 1985
SER - Jobs for Progress	Milwaukee, WI	Milwaukee County	April 1986
Stanly Technical College	Albemarle, NC	Centraline	November 1985

NOTES: N/A indicates not applicable because these Job Corps Centers are federally funded and operated by private contractors and are not part of the SDA system.

have not all had substantial experience with both the JOBSTART services and the JOBSTART target population.

Not surprisingly, given the genesis of the JOBSTART program model, the four Job Corps sites conformed most closely to the operating guidelines of the demonstration in their regular programming. Four of the other 12 sites are educational providers which target young dropouts, but have little or no experience in providing skills training. In JOBSTART, they will broker the occupational skills component, that is, provide it through other training vendors. The remaining eight sites entered the demonstration with experience in the JOBSTART service mix, but youths had not traditionally been the primary target group at some of these sites; instead, they had developed their programs for an older population, or one with higher reading levels.

- **Most JOBSTART sites had to modify considerably their service offerings, program structure or recruitment efforts in order to conform to the JOBSTART guidelines.**

The primary changes made by the sites include hiring new staff, expanding recruitment efforts, augmenting the educational component, and enriching the available support services. For the most part, the enhancement of support services was made possible by finding new sources of financial assistance, developing a system of incentive awards and adding counseling capacity.

- **Although all sites adhere to the basic guidelines of the demonstration, they vary substantially in the way JOBSTART is structured and services are delivered.**

Among the differences that are likely to affect the implementation of JOBSTART, the following stand out: 10 of the 16 sites provide education and training concurrently to JOBSTART enrollees, while six follow a sequence in which youths are moved through the education component before being placed in occupational training. Twelve of the sites provide all JOBSTART instruction on-site, while the remainder broker occupational training with local vendors. Three of the JOBSTART programs begin and end training on a fixed cycle, while the others provide for open entry and open exit. The JOBSTART sites also vary in the kind and amount of support services provided, the educational methods used, and the kind of occupational training available on-site. Over half of the sites are using some type of computer-assisted instruction in the education component.

This diversity among the sites has the advantage of allowing MDRC to explore the operational strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to operating JOBSTART. In addition, the fact that a variety of institutions are operating JOBSTART in somewhat different ways increases the likelihood that the model can be replicated by other sites after the demonstration.

- **In general, JOBSTART operators have been challenged by the amount of time and effort necessary to maintain a steady flow of program applicants. Despite the fact that the two early-starting sites met or came close to meeting the JOBSTART enrollment goals within their yearlong recruitment cycle, most other sites are experiencing considerable difficulty in achieving the goal.**

In fashioning their recruitment strategies, JOBSTART program operators face several challenges. First, operators have had to locate and inform a target population that is widely dispersed. Second, the recruitment message has to be attractive to young people who are known to be skeptical about training programs and alienated by school. In addition, because the target audience for JOBSTART is poor and unemployed, immediate income is often a great need. Staff have had to intensify their outreach efforts in part because a larger number of youths than anticipated were determined ineligible or did not complete the enrollment process.

- **As of December 31, 1986, 1,227 youths had enrolled in the research sample. The demographic characteristics of an early sample randomly assigned through July 1986 suggests that JOBSTART operators are successful in enrolling a very disadvantaged segment of the youth population.**

The early sample of youths randomly assigned through July 1986 is almost evenly made up of males and females. Most are black or Hispanic, with an average reading level that is well below the eighth grade. On average, they had ended their schooling in the tenth grade, and two-thirds had been out of school for at least eight months when they enrolled. Few had prior vocational training and a substantial proportion had never held a job. Most had never married, yet more than half of the young women in the sample had at least one child. The majority of the sample received some sort of government assistance -- cash or in-kind -- either directly in their own name, as in the case of General Assistance, or as part of a family unit that receives benefits under a government-sponsored program. Approximately 20 percent -- and a much larger proportion of the women than the men -- received payments from the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in their own name.

D. Findings on Implementing JOBSTART Within the JTPA System

Despite the care taken to develop a program model that could be incorporated into regular JTPA programming, studies of the implementation of JTPA in its early years suggested a number of reasons why it might nevertheless be difficult to find sites experienced in operating programs similar to JOBSTART and/or willing to do so in a demonstration.

- **JOBSTART provides longer, more costly, and more intensive**

training, and is targeted to a more disadvantaged population than most JTPA programs.

The implementation studies of JTPA and other data indicate that, in its early years, the system served a population that was more educationally advantaged than the eligible population as a whole; that young dropouts were not a service priority in many SDAs; and that relatively few SDAs operated programs targeted specifically to dropouts or other hard-to-employ groups on a sizeable scale. Many training vendors were also reported to screen out applicants with reading levels as low as those of the JOBSTART enrollees.

As discussed earlier, the emphasis of JOBSTART on longer-term training also appears to be at odds with current trends in JTPA. The JOBSTART minimum of 700 hours of instruction -- which translates into about 24 weeks of full-time classes -- is close to the maximum length of training found in one JTPA implementation study. In addition, SDAs are reported to be spending considerably less than the allowable 15 percent limit on support services, and many have ceased to provide needs-based payments -- practices contrary to JOBSTART's emphasis on the need for support services to help overcome the situational and motivational problems likely to affect the JOBSTART enrollees.

- **The performance standards and contracting policies common in the JTPA system provide major disincentives for training vendors to operate JOBSTART.**

The JTPA system is performance-driven. Seven performance standards -- four for adults and three for youths -- are set by the federal government for the states. These are adjusted by governors and then established for local service delivery areas within the state. Local JTPA staff, in turn, use the standards to set performance goals for individual contractors. Throughout the system, emphasis is placed on achieving high placement rates at low cost, and on exceeding the established standards. For example, JTPA agencies in the JOBSTART sample generally hold their contractors to performance standards which exceed those required of the SDA by the state. In addition, the ability to meet or exceed the goals determines whether local contractors will cover their training costs or be funded in the next contract year and whether SDAs will qualify for incentive awards from the state. Under performance-based contracts, which are increasingly used in the JTPA system, vendors are paid only if enrollees reach certain benchmarks of achievement, including placement in a training-related job. Cost-reimbursement contracts, in contrast, cover actual costs up to a maximum, and payments are not tied directly to specific outcomes.

MDRC's interviews with SDA staff at the JOBSTART locations revealed other practices that are likely to discourage services to groups such as those targeted in the demonstration. Performance levels required in contracts generally reflected the type of program operated rather than the type of population served. In particular, despite the fact that federal performance standards differentiate between adult and youth outcomes and recognize that placement in a job is not the only positive outcome for youths, many SDAs in the JOBSTART sample reported that they did not differentiate between youth and adult enrollees in setting performance standards for contractors that provide skills training.

Increasingly, these practices have been identified as likely to discourage vendors from working with more difficult populations who tend to need longer and more expensive training before being ready to enter the labor force. JOBSTART thus raises issues for JTPA staff and local operators concerned about meeting performance standards requiring a high rate of placements at a low cost.

- **Nevertheless, JTPA agencies in some locations were receptive to JOBSTART in its demonstration phase. Sites are operating with JTPA funding, and in a number of cases, JTPA staff were instrumental in identifying and developing potential sites.**

JOBSTART is being operated with locally-awarded JTPA funds at all but one of the 12 sites that are not Job Corps Centers. In addition, 11 of the 12 sites -- including the one that does not receive local JTPA funds -- use state-awarded JTPA funds for JOBSTART. In most cases, these funds were awarded specifically for the demonstration; in others, they represent regular funding that the program operator chose to use for JOBSTART. (Job Corps funding is provided through a different funding stream within the JTPA system. The federal office that oversees the Job Corps encouraged participation by Job Corps sites.)

In addition to providing funds, some state and local JTPA agencies are facilitating the demonstration in other ways. In a few locations, JTPA staff played an active role in identifying and selecting appropriate sites, were instrumental in developing the necessary program modifications, and monitored implementation. The particular route of access into the JTPA system reflects the decentralized nature of that system: in some cases, the local operator was the prime mover; in others it was the staff of either the local Private Industry Council or the local government agency responsible for JTPA; in still others, the state helped to develop local interest in the demonstration.

JTPA staff proved more responsive to the JOBSTART demonstration in

SDAs and states where services to dropouts were a policy priority, and where there was strong interest in incorporating a basic educational component into the local JTPA system. Interest in promoting innovative programming and developing greater capacity to serve dropouts within the public school system were other reasons cited for JOBSTART participation. In addition, the demonstration was appealing because it offered local sites opportunities to engage in staff development, receive technical assistance, acquire national recognition, and contribute to public policy development.

- **Roughly half of the SDAs in the JOBSTART sample have made some change in their standard operating procedures in order to facilitate the implementation of a program serving a more disadvantaged target group.**

Two SDAs wrote cost-reimbursement contracts for JOBSTART, when the usual policy was to use only performance-based contracts. Three SDAs adjusted their placement or positive termination standards for JOBSTART operators, reflecting the fact that they were working with a more difficult population. Another devised a new payment and performance system to encourage the transition of youths from basic education classes into occupational skills training programs. A few earmarked more money for training or support services in JOBSTART, recognizing that this hard-to-serve group would require more assistance than other JTPA enrollees.

- **Nevertheless, certain practices commonly used in SDAs appear to pose potential problems for implementing the JOBSTART model.**

Funding constraints, particularly restrictions placed on the use of support service funds and administrative costs, made it necessary for many sites -- with MDRC's assistance -- to seek additional funding sources for

JOBSTART. Practices cited earlier -- writing contracts that hold JOBSTART operators to performance standards higher than those required of the SDA as a whole or that fail to differentiate between youth and adult outcomes -- could penalize JOBSTART operators for working with a hard-to-serve group.

In addition, federal regulations that do not consider movement of JTPA enrollees from one training program to another as positive terminations could create problems for JOBSTART sites that are brokering skills training after the education component. Finally, educational attainment standards developed by Private Industry Councils and used to measure youth performance in many SDAs may require more improvement than is realistic for the JOBSTART population during the limited time available for training.

- **The fact that a substantial proportion of the JOBSTART SDAs were willing to make accomodations for the demonstration suggests that the JTPA system provides opportunities to respond to special needs groups. However, it is equally clear that such responses are the exception rather than the rule, and that they can mitigate, but not necessarily overcome, problems posed by funding and cost restraints.**

Using the opportunities that exist in the JTPA system to serve the harder-to-employ requires considerable foresight, perseverance and ingenuity, as well as a substantial commitment of time, from JTPA staff and program operators. Local JTPA agencies and contractors are unlikely to incur the risks involved if they are not encouraged to do so by state and federal policies. Two important ways to provide such encouragement are in the application of the federal performance standards at the state and local levels, and in the use made of the JTPA 6 percent and 8 percent set-asides earmarked, respectively, for incentive grants and coordination with education programs.

E. The Implementation Challenge

The launching of the JOBSTART demonstration represents a major achievement in the current employment and training environment. However, many operational challenges still face the JOBSTART sites. They include: overcoming the difficulties associated with recruiting young high-school dropouts in order to meet the enrollment targets in JOBSTART; ensuring that the youths remain in training for the intended duration; and successfully placing participants in jobs. Sites offering occupational skills training after academic instruction -- and particularly those that plan to provide training through other contractors -- face the additional task of moving youths through the educational component in a timely manner and meeting the entry requirements of skills training courses.

The degree to which JOBSTART sites achieve these goals -- and the ways in which the JTPA system and other factors affect their ability to do so -- will be discussed in the implementation report scheduled for release late in 1988.

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LAUNCHING JOBSTART

A Demonstration For Dropouts in the JTPA System

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The JOBSTART demonstration is designed to test the effectiveness of a program which prepares young high school dropouts for employment by combining instruction in basic education and occupational skills training with support services and job placement assistance. A total of 16 programs operating across the country were selected to become JOBSTART sites and participate in the demonstration.[1] The first initiated a JOBSTART program in August 1985 and the last in October 1986. Each site will be operating JOBSTART for up to two years; another two years will be devoted to follow-up research. The sites represent a variety of institutional service deliverers, including community-based organizations, school-based programs and non-residential components of Job Corps Centers.

The overall evaluation of the JOBSTART demonstration will consist of three parts. The impact analysis will use an experimental research design to examine the program's effects on employment, earnings and welfare dependency, as well as on childbearing patterns, educational status and criminal activity. The benefit-cost analysis will identify the costs of operating JOBSTART and determine whether net benefits exceed or fall short of net costs: that is, whether the program is cost-effective. The implementation analysis will describe the services offered at JOBSTART sites, the patterns of participation and program departure, and the institutional arrangements and other factors that facilitate or hinder service delivery.

Funding for the JOBSTART evaluation is being provided by a consortium of foundations, national organizations, and corporations, as well as the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Commission for Employment Policy. A very small proportion of the local costs of operating JOBSTART is also being covered by contributions from such corporations and foundations. The funders of both the evaluation and operational activities include the Rockefeller, Ford, Hewlett, Mott, American Telephone and Telegraph, Atlantic Richfield, Aetna Life and Casualty, and Stuart Foundations, as well as the Chase Manhattan Bank. However, it should be noted that the majority of JOBSTART operational funds come through state and local agencies, using monies allocated under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the federally-funded employment and training system targeted to economically disadvantaged adults and youths.

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a nonprofit organization, developed the JOBSTART demonstration and is conducting the evaluation. In launching the demonstration, MDRC drew on over a decade of experience in managing and evaluating programs designed to help disadvantaged persons achieve self-sufficiency. A number of these projects -- the National Supported Work Demonstration, the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Project and Project Redirection -- served populations similar to the one targeted in JOBSTART.

A. Policy Significance of the Demonstration

From a policy perspective, the JOBSTART demonstration is significant both as a program model that is targeted specifically to dropout youths and as a social experiment that tests the effectiveness of that program by using a random assignment methodology to create a control group. Its interest as both a program model and a social experiment is heightened by the necessity of designing a demonstration that could be operated as part of the existing employment and training system, rather than one funded by special resources.

The need to concentrate scarce resources on unemployed high school dropouts has become a consistent theme in the recent literature on youth employment policy. Thus, a National Academy of Sciences review panel concluded its study of youth employment and training programs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) with the strong recommendation that "school dropouts be given priority status for employment and training programs and research."[2] Two other experts on youth employment policy concluded a similar review by recommending that employment programs in the 1980s should "give highest priority to [serving] unemployed out-of-school disadvantaged youth."[3] In recent months, the U.S. Department of Labor has also begun to focus attention on the need for JTPA programs to target more resources to the youth dropout population.

A number of studies also stress the importance of evaluating programs with a random assignment, or experimental, design, and note how the failure to use a sufficiently rigorous design methodology has greatly weakened the evaluation literature on employment and training programs. The National Academy of Sciences' review of CETA youth programs concluded that few of the findings in the large body of evaluation literature are definitive because of poor research designs.[4] The report strongly urged the use of random assignment design in future evaluations to avoid the weaknesses of the past evaluations. In addition, another panel of experts questioned the reliability of the CETA longitudinal study, which used a comparison group analysis to estimate impacts on employment and earnings, and called unequivocally for the development of experiments using random assignment to test the effectiveness of JTPA programs.[5] The JOBSTART demonstration represents one of the first attempts to do so.

Because the JOBSTART program is planned to be operated within the JTPA system, using JTPA funding and subject to JTPA regulations and performance standards, the demonstration offers the opportunity to learn about the challenges and constraints of mounting a social experiment in a period of fiscal restraint. The implementation research, begun in this report, is also intended to provide some guidance to operators about how programs can be adapted to serve young dropouts within the parameters of the JTPA system, as well as lessons for policymakers about what changes in the current system would facilitate services to this target group.

Thus, the JOBSTART evaluation, concentrating on three themes, will offer lessons about the effectiveness of the JOBSTART program model as a strategy for increasing the employment and earnings of the young dropout population; the capacity of the JTPA system to incorporate such a program; and the interplay between research design considerations and operational constraints in an environment in which funding is severely limited.

The current report, written while the demonstration was still in a start-up stage in many sites, focuses on the second and third themes. The full implementation analysis of the JOBSTART demonstration is scheduled for release in late 1988; the impact findings -- based on 24 months of follow-up on the research sample -- will be released in mid-1990.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the nature of the youth unemployment problem, services to dropouts in JTPA, lessons from previous demonstrations, the development of the JOBSTART program model, and issues raised by operating JOBSTART as a demonstration within the JTPA system.

B. The Dimensions of the Youth Unemployment/Dropout Problem

A growing body of literature has established the relationship between the failure to complete high school, basic skills deficiency and chronic unemployment. Although estimates of the national dropout rate vary depending on the definition used -- generally ranging from 14 percent to 27 percent -- it is recognized that the rate is much higher for minority youths from poor families than for other segments of the population.[6] National data that show a dropout rate of 13 percent for white youths also show rates of 17 percent and 19 percent for blacks and Hispanics, respectively. Other data indicate that, for youths aged 21 during the period 1979-1982, the dropout rates for whites, blacks and Hispanics were 12 percent, 23 percent, and 36 percent respectively. In addition, the dropout rate is three times higher for youths from households with low-income, low-skill earners of limited educational backgrounds than for youths at the highest end of the socioeconomic scale.

Young high school dropouts are at a particular disadvantage in the labor market because they usually lack the basic education and work skills that are required in most entry-level jobs. Indeed, chronic joblessness among youths is largely concentrated among a relatively small segment of the teen population: youths who have dropped out of school and who come from poor or minority families.[7] Joblessness rates are a better measure of the problem than unemployment rates because they include people too discouraged to look for work.

In March 1985, the joblessness rate for black high school dropouts was 73 percent, compared to 40 percent for black youths who had completed high school. For white youths, the joblessness rate was 48 percent for high school dropouts and 20 percent for high school graduates.[8] These figures illustrate both the greater degree of joblessness among high school dropouts than high school graduates, and the higher levels of joblessness experienced by minorities than whites.

Even if they have been lucky enough to find employment, high school dropouts remain at a disadvantage in the workplace. Usually working in secondary labor market jobs, the youths are not likely to develop the skills necessary to advance into better-paying jobs. Thus, it is not surprising that the lifetime earnings for high school dropouts are estimated to be one-third less than those of high school graduates.[9]

These statistics are particularly sobering because a growing body of evidence suggests that the problem of chronic joblessness for this group will not be solved by a general improvement in the economy, nor by the natural aging of the youth population, nor by a contraction in the size of the teenage population as the baby boom population spurt subsides.

One recent study shows, for example, that despite the general upturn in the economy since the recession of the early 1980s, in both absolute and relative terms the labor market position of teens in 1985 has not matched the peak conditions of 1979.[10] Moreover, considerable evidence suggests that the most at-risk segment of the youth population -- those who are educationally disadvantaged, poor and minority -- will make up a disproportionately large segment of the youth population in the future.[11]

Nor should it be expected that the problems associated with youth unemployment will be solved without intervention when the teenagers reach adulthood. Noting that between 1955 and 1982, the proportion of black men aged 25 to 34 without jobs rose from 15 percent to 23 percent, a recent report warns that "the serious black youth unemployment problem has evolved into a striking amount of joblessness for young black adults."[12] Moreover, fully one-quarter of all black males under the age of 25 have never held a job.[13] Such findings tend to deepen concern that, as expressed in another study, the educationally and economically disadvantaged youths struggling to become part of the workforce today "are at great risk of becoming the adult poor and the 'dependent poor' of tomorrow."[14]

Inadequate skills preparation and chronic joblessness exact a high price from both the individual and society. Too often, the high school dropout faces a future of unemployment or underemployment, frustration and blighted hopes. Society as a whole experiences losses in productivity as well as the higher costs associated with greater welfare dependency and potentially higher rates of drug abuse and crime.

C. Services to Dropouts and Youths in JTPA

Serving young high school dropouts has historically presented major operational challenges to service deliverers in the employment and training system. The record of CETA youth programs shows that many programs designed specifically to serve dropouts had difficulties in recruiting youths and/or retaining them in the programs. Other approaches designed to serve both in-school and out-of-school youths encountered the same or other problems and ended up serving mostly in-school youths.[15] Despite growing recognition of the correlation between educational disadvantage and chronic joblessness, recent trends in employment and training policy have constituted a new source of concern that the groups most at-risk are not receiving the services that they need.

The Job Training Partnership Act offers a major opportunity to provide training to disadvantaged youths by mandating that 40 percent of the funds allocated to local service delivery areas be spent on youths under the age of 22, and that dropouts be served in proportion to their representation in the eligible population. (The requirement for services to dropouts includes adults as well as youths.) However, early reports on the implementation of the JTPA legislation indicated that most service delivery areas were falling short of the required expenditure level for youths and the service ratio for dropouts.[16]

Explanations of these difficulties have pointed to the tendency to combine youths with adults in training programs rather than to tailor training to their specific needs; the elimination of financial supports while youths were in training; a reduced emphasis on outreach and recruitment, in part because of restrictions on administrative costs; and slowness at the local level in developing systems to measure youth outcomes other than job placement.[17]

Questions have also been raised about whether the efforts of the employment and training community to improve quality and build more accountability into the JTPA system have, in somewhat perverse fashion, made it more difficult to address the special needs of educationally disadvantaged persons, who face severe obstacles to employment. A particular focus of concern is the way in which performance standards -- discussed in Chapter 2 -- have been used to emphasize high placement rates and low program costs, thus discouraging operators from serving the most-at-risk segments of the population, such as dropouts. These groups, who need longer training and more support services to enter the workforce, are relatively more expensive to serve than other groups, putting operators who work with them at a comparative disadvantage if judged by the same standards as operators serving others.

As discussed in Chapter 2, considerable attention has been focused in recent years on ameliorating some of the conditions that make it difficult for JTPA operators to work with very disadvantaged youths. Questions remain, however, about the capacity of the JTPA system to address adequately the needs of the hard-to-serve unemployed youth population, particularly young dropouts. In this context, the JOBSTART demonstration takes on additional significance as a way to highlight the issues, test what strategies can make a difference, and provide guidance to practitioners on what to do and how to do it.

D. Developing the JOBSTART Program Model

In developing a model program to prepare young high school dropouts for employment, MDRC sought to draw on the lessons of both past research and current operational experience. First, MDRC commissioned an extensive and critical review of the evaluation literature on programs targeted to young dropouts. Second, in a symposium held at Brandeis University in late 1983, researchers, educators and program operators shared views about what program models held most promise of working for this population. Third, during a yearlong pilot phase that ended in March 1985, MDRC staff studied program operations in detail in five programs that served young dropouts, and gathered additional information on the delivery of youth services in the JTPA system from a wide range of training vendors and JTPA staff.[18]

Because of problems in the research methodology already mentioned, the evaluation record of past programs does not provide a great deal of guidance on how employment and training programs can best serve dropouts. Nevertheless, a few clear lessons on the effectiveness of various program models did emerge from the literature review prepared for MDRC.[19] These findings, which are summarized below, are consistent with the conclusions of similar reviews that have been published subsequently.[20]

- Programs that provide only work experience to high school dropouts do not appear to have longer-term positive employment effects, although they seem to succeed with an in-school population.

  -- The National Supported Work Demonstration provided a year of paid work experience under conditions of close supervision, peer support and graduated stress. A rigorous evaluation using a random assignment design found that, although Supported Work proved successful with other economically disadvantaged groups -- such as long-term welfare recipients -- it did not have lasting effects on the earnings and employment of youth dropouts, most of whom had delinquency records.[21]

  -- There is some evidence that work experience combined with school or other alternative education enrollment can have positive employment effects. The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Project (YIEPP) -- also a national demonstration -- provided disadvantaged youths with guaranteed employment (part-time during the school year and full-time during the summer) if they returned to or remained in school or an approved educational program. The evaluation showed positive employment and earnings effects that persisted for minority youths for one year or more after most youths ceased participating in the subsidized work.[22]

  However, most of the youths eligible for the job guarantee were enrolled in a regular high school setting; only a small share (18 percent) were out of school the semester before the program began. A large proportion of the youths who re-enrolled in school dropped out again, primarily because there were few alternative programs in their areas that met their need for a job-oriented education approach.

- Short-term interventions which primarily provide job search and other placement assistance for dropouts have modest short-term effects that do not continue over time.

  -- A short-term pre-employment skills and placement program for dropouts was found to have statistically significant effects on weekly earnings nine months after enrollment in an evaluation conducted by Public/Private Ventures. These findings held up at 14 months, but a more rigorous analysis of follow-up data collected 24 to 40 months after enrollment revealed no continuing earning effects.[23]

- A multiple service, comprehensive program offering basic education and skills training programs for dropouts has shown more positive employment effects.

  -- A major study of the Job Corps, an intensive education and skills training program in a residential setting, found that program participation increased employment and earnings and the probability of receiving a high school degree or equivalency diploma.[24] Although the study was not based on randomly assigned experimental and control groups, the comparison group design is generally regarded as having been well-executed, and the study is considered sound. The Job Corps findings are particularly important given the serious deprivation of the typical participant.

These findings suggest that a model worth testing for young dropouts is one that combines either work experience or occupational skills training with instruction in basic or remedial education;[25] the findings also suggest that the intervention should be long and intense. These considerations were paramount when MDRC began to develop the JOBSTART demonstration in 1983. However, since JOBSTART was to be operated as part of the regular JTPA system, practical considerations figured heavily in the design stage. A program model or research design that would be impossible for JTPA operators to run as part of their normal programming had to be ruled out. Information gained from in-depth study of programs serving dropout youths at the five pilot sites (including both work experience and classroom training models) and interviews with JTPA staff and training vendors during the JOBSTART pilot year were very important in shaping the program design. Thus, the program model and operating guidelines developed for JOBSTART reflect not only the lessons from past literature but also the operational constraints of the current employment and training system. (See Table 1.1.) The interplay between the two considerations is discussed below.

1. The Target Group

JOBSTART is targeted to economically disadvantaged high school dropouts between the ages of 17 and 21, who do not have a high school equivalency degree (GED) and who read below the eighth-grade level on standardized tests. Income is to be consistent with the eligibility criteria for JTPA. The reading requirement was chosen to target the program on a group most at risk of long-term joblessness and least likely to be served by current programs.

Targeting the program in this way to poor readers both increased the access of a needy group to services and ensured that the control group was unlikely to be enrolled in similar programs, thus strengthening the research design. From a research perspective, it is important that controls do not receive services similar to those received by experimentals since an impact is defined as the difference in the outcomes between experimentals and controls. From the JOBSTART operators' perspective, it was easier to accept this research requirement if JOBSTART applicants would be unlikely to receive JTPA training, as could be expected for the very disadvantaged group specified by the eligibility criteria.

TABLE 1.1

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE JOBSTART PROGRAM MODEL

Target Population	To be eligible for JOBSTART, individuals must be: - 17 to 21 years old - high school dropouts without a diploma or GED - reading below the eighth grade level on a standardized test - economically disadvantaged, as defined by the Job Training Partnership Act
Basic Education Instruction	Sites will implement a curriculum that is: - self-paced and competency-based - computer-managed and -assisted, if possible - a minimum of 200 hours in length - focused on reading, communication and basic computation skills
Occupational Skills Training	Sites will implement a curriculum that: - is in a classroom setting - combines theory and hands-on experience - prepares enrollees for jobs in high-demand occupations - provides at least 500 hours of training - has been developed with the assistance of the private sector to ensure that graduates will meet the entry-level requirements of local employers
Training-Related Support Services	Services should be tailored to individual need and should include, in addition to transportation and child care, some combination of the following: - work readiness and life skills training - personal and vocational counseling, mentoring, tutorial assistance, referral to external support systems - needs-based payments or incentive payments tied to length of stay, program attendance or performance
Job Development and Placement Assistance	JOBSTART operators and/or their subcontractors will be responsible for assisting participants in finding training-related jobs

2. Basic Education Instruction

The JOBSTART program model calls for a minimum of 200 hours of instruction in basic education, using individualized curricula that allow youths to proceed at their own pace toward required competency goals. Sites were encouraged to use computer-aided instruction, but not required to do so. The focus on individualized, self-paced instruction reflects the effectiveness of such an approach in raising the levels of GED and high school diploma attainment as shown in the 1982 Job Corps evaluation.[26] More recent data from the Remediation and Training Institute, which has made this type of instruction system widely available, suggests that a minimum of 200 hours is necessary to bring enrollees to the point that they can qualify for a GED or enter skills training.

3. Occupational Skills Training

JOBSTART sites are required to provide a minimum of 500 hours of classroom instruction in skills in high-demand occupations in the local labor market. The decision to require skills training rather than work experience reflects a combination of research and programmatic considerations. The evaluation record suggests that both work experience and skills training -- combined with education -- may be effective strategies for raising earnings and employment among the target population. However, because of the restrictions on work experience in the JTPA legislation, classroom skills training was considered the more viable option.[27]

The minimum requirement of 500 hours was also a compromise. Ideally, MDRC would have liked to test the effectiveness of a year's training for this target group, based on research evidence that longer, more intensive programs have longer-lasting impacts. However, training programs of that length are relatively rare in the JTPA system, in which the maximum length of classroom training tends to be 26 weeks, equivalent to 780 hours of instruction offered six hours a day.[28] The 500-hour minimum seemed the longest training period that most JTPA agencies would accept.

4. Support Services

A consistent theme in the literature on programs serving young dropouts is the difficulty of keeping youths in the program and the many problems that interfere with their attendance. It was expected that substantial support services and other incentives would be needed to retain JOBSTART enrollees, many of whom are teenage mothers. The kinds of supports that sites are expected to provide are shown in Table 1.1.

5. Placement Assistance

Placement into full-time unsubsidized employment is a major JOBSTART objective. JOBSTART program operators and their subcontractors are responsible for assisting participants to find jobs.

E. Issues Raised by the JOBSTART Program Design and Research Design

Within the parameters of these basic guidelines, JOBSTART sites have been given considerable flexibility in developing their programs. For example, they can vary the sequence of activities, the content of the education and training curricula, the educational methods, the number of hours spent each day in classes, and the amount and kind of financial and other supports.

Flexibility was necessary for two reasons. First, the evaluation literature does not provide definitive guidance on many aspects of operating programs for dropouts. For example, there is no evidence to suggest whether basic education is more effective if it is provided concurrently with, or in a sequence preceding, skills training, or whether separate youth and adult classes are more effective than putting the two groups together. Second, the fact that sites had to build JOBSTART into their existing programs imposed practical limitations on the degree to which sites could change their current programs to make them conform to a specified model. A more prescriptive model would have greatly reduced the pool of potential sites.

Although the JOBSTART program has borrowed heavily from the Job Corps model since it was one of the few programs to prove effective in serving dropout youths, there are some key differences. JOBSTART will be implemented not in a residential but in a community setting, which should keep program costs lower than those of the Job Corps. JOBSTART is also designed to be more easily duplicated within the current employment and training environment. Thus, the JOBSTART evaluation offers the opportunity to build on the Job Corps research and answer a critical question left open by that evaluation: namely, can a similar mix of services offered in a non-residential setting produce similar impacts and do so at a lower operating cost? The inclusion of the non-residential component of four Job Corps Centers strengthens this aspect of the research.

The evaluation of any social experiment leads to inevitable tensions between the desire to maintain the purity of a research design and the necessity to meet "real world" standards of practicability and replicability. In the JOBSTART demonstration, the tensions were particularly acute because MDRC was not able to provide sites with the funds necessary to operate the program.

Conflicting demands, inherent in a demonstration such as JOBSTART, are explained below:

- Research interests alone would dictate the development of a specific, standardized program model that could be implemented uniformly across all sites since this provides the strongest possible test of a treatment. However, operational reality -- particularly in a limited funding environment -- pushes in the direction of allowing considerable flexibility in program specifications. Thus, a balance had to be found between two designs: one so prescriptive as to make difficult finding enough sites to provide a meaningful test and replicating the model later as contrasted to one that allowed so much variation that the treatment would not be sufficiently standardized to test.

- The selection of sites for the demonstration also required decisions between alternative approaches: enrolling only sites that were exemplary program operators or those that were more representative of the universe of all programs. The former approach would yield a test of what the model could accomplish under relatively favorable circumstances and the latter offer a more realistic indication of the outcomes to be anticipated should the model be widely adopted.

- The goal of having the longest possible post-program follow-up conflicted with that of evaluating the program in its maturity. To meet the former goal, sites would be encouraged to begin operations quickly, and the research data collection would begin shortly after enrollment. The latter argued for delaying the build-up of the research sample until the program had settled into stable operations.

The ways in which these conflicting goals have shaped the development of the JOBSTART demonstration -- and the degree to which they have been resolved by the practical constraints of the JTPA service delivery system and funding limitations -- will be a major focus throughout this report.

F. Scope of This Report

The major research questions that this report will address are:

- How have the operational constraints of the JTPA system affected the program design and evaluation strategy for the demonstration?

- To what degree did JTPA funding restrictions, contracting procedures, and performance standards facilitate or constrain interest in the demonstration among program operators and JTPA agencies? How are they likely to affect program operations once sites are up and running?
- What kinds of changes did sites have to make in their existing programs and enrollment patterns in order to conform to the JOBSTART program model?
- How much variation exists among the JOBSTART sites in the types of service providers, prior experience and service mix?
- How have these factors affected the research design?
- What are the emerging patterns in recruitment in the early-starting sites, and what factors appear to be influencing those patterns?

Discussing JOBSTART as a program model, as a demonstration and as part of the JTPA system, the remainder of this report elaborates on the themes introduced in this chapter. Chapter 2 provides some background on the JTPA system and how JOBSTART relates to it. Chapter 3 discusses how sites were recruited to participate in the demonstration, and the reasons why they chose to do so. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the JOBSTART sites: the variations in program design, prior experience and the ways in which they changed their programs to conform to the model. Chapter 5 takes a more detailed look at the JTPA contracting procedures and performance standards, and how they are likely to affect JOBSTART implementation. Chapter 6 discusses emerging patterns of recruitment, as well as demographic characteristics of the initial research sample.

CHAPTER 2

INCORPORATING THE JOBSTART DEMONSTRATION INTO THE JTPA SYSTEM

The fact that MDRC could not provide the operating funds necessary to run JOBSTART -- and would have to rely on JTPA funding to implement the demonstration -- was a key consideration when MDRC began to recruit sites in the spring of 1985. Despite the care taken to develop a program model that could be incorporated into regular JTPA programming, it would nevertheless be difficult to do so for several reasons.

First, the emphasis in the program model on longer-term, more intensive training and enriched support services was at odds with the trends in JTPA toward shorter training, fewer support services and less costly programs.

Second, the early implementation experience of JTPA suggested that there were few incentives and a number of disincentives in federal, state and local JTPA policy for serving the JOBSTART target group -- youths who were more disadvantaged than the JTPA youth population as a whole.

Third, the research requirement that sites randomly assign JOBSTART applicants into experimental and control groups could create both administrative and political difficulties for JOBSTART operators.

In order to explain some of the issues that were likely to deter program operators from participation or to interest them in JOBSTART, this chapter provides background information on the JTPA system and how JOBSTART relates to it. The discussion focuses on youth policy and programs, performance standards and funding sources.

A. The JTPA System: Administration and Funding

The employment and training system established by the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 is a highly decentralized, federally-funded program that provides job training and related services to economically disadvantaged persons. Under Title IIA -- the basic training title for economically disadvantaged youths and adults -- funds are allocated by the Department of Labor to the states, using a formula that takes into account the incidence of poverty and unemployment in each state. The states, in turn, suballocate the funds to local Service Delivery Areas (SDAs), which encompass units of local government. Currently, there are about 600 SDAs across the country.

The transition from CETA to JTPA represented a devolution of authority from the federal government to the states. Apart from allocating the funds and issuing performance standards, the federal role in JTPA is primarily oversight and review, including the monitoring of state compliance with the provisions of the legislation. In the early JTPA years, the Department of Labor provided little policy guidance, promoted few program initiatives, and deliberately restricted its rule-making authority and technical assistance role in order to give states significant policy influence on the new system.

Governors have been given policymaking responsibility in a number of areas, including the designation of SDAs, the adjustment of national performance standards for SDAs, the use of the discretionary set-asides -- which amount to 22 percent of the state's Title IIA allocation -- and the establishment of goals, policy and regulations for each state's JTPA program. Many of these responsibilities are shared with or delegated to the State Job Training Coordinating Council or other state agencies. Overall, the JTPA role played by states varies substantially across the country. Some states have played a leading role in guiding local JTPA policy; others have treated the SDAs in much the same way that the federal Department of Labor handled the states.

At the service delivery level, the oversight and decision-making functions are shared by the Private Industry Council (PIC) -- in which a majority of representatives must come from the private sector -- and the local unit of government. Both the PIC and the local governmental unit must approve the SDA's annual spending plan. In some areas, the PIC sets policy and also serves as the "administrative entity," that is, the organization responsible for administering JTPA programs in the SDA; in others, the local governmental unit does so; in still others, the administrative responsibility is shared or delegated to a different body.

Three different JTPA funding streams are possible sources of money for JOBSTART. Some of these JTPA funds are controlled by states; others are controlled by SDAs. Each type is subject to different restrictions on its use.

Seventy-eight percent of the Title IIA money allocated to states is suballocated to SDAs. The "78 percent" funds have the greatest number of restrictions on their use:

- At least 70 percent of these funds must be spent on training activities.
- No more than 15 percent can be spent on administrative costs.
- The remaining funds are available for support services. Waivers are available from states if SDAs meet certain

hardship conditions.

- Funds cannot be used to pay allowances or stipends to JTPA enrollees, but individuals may qualify for assistance based on need (needs-based payments), if the payment schedule is approved by the PIC.

- Programs run with the 78 percent funding are subject to the federal performance standards.

SDAs can also qualify for discretionary funds awarded by the states from the remaining proportion (22 percent) of the state's Title IIA allocation. The following set-asides are established in the law:

- 8 percent of the state's Title IIA allocation is reserved for state programs to provide education, including vocational education and other related services. Eighty percent of the money is to be spent on training programs; 20 percent is set aside for promoting coordination between education and job training.

- 6 percent is to be used to provide technical assistance for SDAs that fail to meet performance standards or to reward SDAs that exceed performance or serve special groups.

- 3 percent is to fund special programs for older workers.

- 5 percent is reserved for state administrative costs.

States are given a good deal of flexibility to determine for what purposes the set-aside funds will be used and how they will be distributed. Programs funded under 6 percent incentive grants or the 8 percent education set-aside are not always held to the same cost restrictions as apply to the 78 percent funds, and are not necessarily subject to federal performance standards. Unless other restrictions are imposed by the state, program operators have flexibility in how they use these funds. For this reason, the 6 percent and 8 percent set-asides seem particularly well-suited to support innovative programming or services to special populations. A potential drawback, however, is that the 8 percent funds require a dollar-per-dollar match from non-JTPA funds.

B. Services to Youths and Dropouts in JTPA

Title IIA of the JTPA legislation provides for special treatment for youths: first, by mandating that a specific proportion of local program funds be spent on them; second, by establishing different performance standards for youths than adults; and third, by suggesting specific program designs and sequences appropriate for youths. These provisions are discussed in turn below. Additional youth services are authorized in the Summer Youth Employment Program (Title IIB), which provides publicly-subsidized jobs to JTPA-eligible youths during the summer months.

To ensure an equitable level of services to youths, the JTPA legislation stipulates that SDAs spend at least 40 percent of their Title IIA allocation on this population, defined as young people aged 16 through 21, and in some cases, 14- and 15-year-olds. Should the local ratio of youths to adults in the JTPA eligible population differ from the national ratio, governors can adjust the expenditure requirement up or down accordingly. SDAs are not required to serve only young dropouts -- they may, for example, serve adults who dropped out of school in their teenage years -- but they are required to serve all dropouts (youths and adults) in the same ratio as their incidence in the eligible population.

Separate criteria were established in the JTPA legislation for evaluating JTPA programs serving youths, reflecting the view that outcomes other than placement in a job are appropriate for youth enrollees. For adults, performance is judged on the entered employment rate, the cost per entered employment, the average wage at placement, as well as the entered employment rate for adult welfare recipients. For youths, the standards are the entered employment rate, the positive termination rate and the cost per positive termination. As currently defined, the positive termination rate is calculated based on the number of youths who enter unsubsidized employment, return to school full time, enter non-Title II training, reach employment competency levels defined by the PIC, or complete a major level of education.[1] In fact, however, as discussed later, these employment competency measures for the most part have not yet been fully developed or utilized.

The federal performance standards established for program years 1984-1985 and 1986 are as follows:[2]

Standards for Adults	PY 1986	PY 1984-1985
Entered Employment Rate	62%	55%
Cost Per Entered Employment	$4,374	$5,704
Average Wage at Placement	$4.91	$4.91
Welfare Entered Employment Rate	51%	39%
Standards for Youths		
Entered Employment Rate	43%	41%
Positive Termination Rate	75%	82%
Cost Per Positive Termination	$4,900	$4,900

The JTPA legislation also highlights the appropriateness of special approaches for youths by describing a sequence of four "exemplary youth programs" that can be operated in addition to the regular training activities mentioned for youths and adults.

The legislation stops short, however, of mandating that SDAs actually operate these exemplary programs, or that youths be served in separate programs that recognize their special needs; if local planners desire it, youths can be combined with adults in all programs for JTPA services. In this respect, as well as in the decision not to allocate funds separately for youth programs, the JTPA legislation is less categorical than its CETA predecessor.

In addition, concerns have been raised that other provisions of the JTPA legislation make it difficult to address the needs of the unemployed youth population: in particular, the restrictions on the use of support services, the limitations on the amount of work experience costs that can be billed to training,[3] and the elimination of cash stipends while participants are in training. Further, while the legislation includes rules for sanctioning SDAs that fail to meet their overall performance standards, no penalties are spelled out for SDAs that fail to meet the 40 percent youth expenditure requirement, potentially weakening the seriousness with which this provision is taken.

Operational experience to date indicates that SDAs are having a difficult time complying with the youth provisions in the JTPA legislation. All of the early implementation reports on the JTPA system[4] and a more recent survey[5] reveal that many SDAs are falling short of spending the required amount of Title IIA funds on youths. The reasons most frequently cited by states and SDAs for the underspending include: recruitment problems, low levels of enrollment, lack of separate programs for youths, absence of creative programming, lack of stipends and low program costs.

Nor have SDAs been successful in serving the required proportion of dropouts. In fact, enrollment data from the first half of JTPA program year 1985 indicate that, overall, JTPA enrollees are more educationally advantaged than the eligible population, with a higher proportion of youths who have completed high school or more.[6] JTPA enrollees, as a whole, are also more educationally advantaged than CETA enrollees; a comparison of 1984 JTPA enrollees with CETA enrollees in 1980 and 1982 showed that about 23 percent of the JTPA enrollees were dropouts, compared to 30 and 29 percent respectively, in these years under CETA.7

The JTPA system as a whole has also experienced considerable difficulty in meeting the positive termination standard established by the Secretary of Labor, although the actual entered employment rate has surpassed the youth standard:8

Youth Standard	PY 1984-1985 Standard	PY 1984 Actual
Entered Employment Rate	41%	54%
Positive Termination Rate	82%	62%
Cost Per Positive Termination	$4,900	$3,472

It is generally argued that underperformance on this measure is largely explained by the slowness of many SDAs to introduce a PIC-approved employment competency system, as well as by the fact that employment competencies were not until recently required as a reporting item for positive termination documentation.

C. JOBSTART and JTPA Service Delivery

The difficulties that SDAs have experienced in meeting the required youth expenditure level and the trend toward serving less disadvantaged youths suggest problems that might face MDRC in introducing JOBSTART into the JTPA system. Finding operators either capable of or experienced in running programs like JOBSTART -- who were also interested in becoming part of a research demonstration -- would not be easy, given the common practices identified in the early implementation studies of JTPA.

The key points of variance between the JOBSTART model and the general thrust of JTPA programming were:

- Target Population.

  The JOBSTART target population -- young high school dropouts reading below the eighth grade level -- was not a priority service group in most SDAs. According to the report on implementation of JTPA in 1983-1984, produced by Grinker, Walker and Associates in 1985, the proportion of dropout youths served in the sample SDAs ranged from 12 percent to 58 percent; the proportion of youths who were high school graduates was consistently higher, ranging from 31 percent to 63 percent. Many SDAs also targeted a large proportion of in-school youths.[9] More recent data from the Job Training Longitudinal Survey (JTLS) in the first half of program year 1985 show that about 25 percent of JTPA youth enrollees are dropouts.[10]

  Data on the reading levels of dropout youths enrolled in JTPA are not available, but MDRC's interviews during the JOBSTART pilot year indicated that it was common practice for many occupational skills training vendors to require a minimum of an eighth- or ninth-grade reading level as a prerequisite for entry into classroom training. A study produced by Grinker Associates in 1986 provides evidence that many SDAs set prerequisites of at least seventh-grade reading and math levels; in some training courses, enrollees were required to have a GED or high school diploma.[11]

  Two implementation reports produced in 1985 -- one by Grinker, Walker and Associates, the other by Westat, Inc. -- also indicate that programs specifically designed for or targeted to dropouts were the exception rather than the rule in the early JTPA system. In contrast, the trend was to enroll dropouts in adult programs rather than to treat the youths as a special needs group. Where targeted programming did exist, such programs accounted for less than 2 percent of the SDA's budget and served a small number of persons, according to the report by Grinker, Walker and Associates.[12]

- Length of Training.

  Training in JOBSTART was intended to be relatively long-term. Programs providing a minimum of 200 hours of basic education and 500 hours of occupational skills training would have to operate for a minimum of 24 weeks if both components were offered concurrently and six hours of classes were scheduled per day; if training were part-time or sequential, with education preceding skills training, the duration of training would be substantially lengthened.

In contrast, the report by Grinker, Walker and Associates found that the maximum length of classroom training scheduled at the sample SDAs was 26 weeks. The actual average amount of time a youth spent in JTPA training, according to this study was 12 weeks.[13]

- Program Mix.

  Instruction in basic education was available -- often as an adjunct to other training -- in three-fifths of the SDAs in the sample used in the study by Grinker, Walker and Associates. Most remedial activities were scheduled to last between 12 and 18 weeks, close to the minimum expected in JOBSTART. In general, SDAs were reported to offer little sequencing or multi-component JTPA training, largely because of the emphasis on low-cost training and an interest in serving as many as possible of the eligible population.[14]

- Support Services.

  As a program model that stresses the importance of individualized attention, counseling, child care, transportation and financial assistance as supplements to training, JOBSTART runs counter to JTPA policy in many SDAs where the overall trend is to provide less support than in CETA. A GAO report suggested that this was not caused only by the limitations on available funds for support services, since many SDAs were spending less than the allowable JTPA proportion on such services.[15] The study produced by Grinker Associates found that SDAs routinely spent less than the allowable proportion of funds on support services, and that applicants with high support needs were likely to be screened out by training vendors.[16]

- Control Group Services.

  Still another potential disincentive was the research requirement that sites recruit at least 200 youths to be randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of approximately 100 members each. The control group would not be eligible for services at the site or be referred to other training vendors in any preferential way.

  This requirement imposed burdens of two kinds on JOBSTART operators and SDAs. First, it meant that training vendors had to expand their recruitment efforts in order to enroll a number of youths whom they would never serve, thereby increasing their operating costs. Second, the denial of services to controls was a very sensitive issue for some sites since youths would be recruited for the program and then turned

> away. Moreover, if SDAs were having difficulty enrolling youths, the creation of a control group was likely to cause concern about the effects of the demonstration on youth enrollment levels within the SDA.

Thus, JOBSTART is targeted to a group known to be difficult to serve and often ignored by JTPA training vendors. Moreover, the JOBSTART model was designed to offer training that is longer and more intensive than most JTPA training. This had significant implications for launching the demonstration. The fact that programs like JOBSTART are relatively rare in the JTPA environment meant either that the pool of potential sites would be quite limited or that existing programs would have to be significantly modified to conform to the program design. The opportunity for modification was limited, however, by the lack of financial incentives and by concerns about how JOBSTART would affect the ability of both training vendors and local JTPA staffs to meet the system's performance standards.

D. JOBSTART and JTPA Performance Standards

This combination of circumstances -- a more disadvantaged target group receiving longer and more intensive training -- has serious implications for program operators using JTPA funds and held to performance standards that anticipate a high level of placements at a low cost. An understanding of how performance standards are used in the JTPA system is important for understanding why these concerns could act as powerful disincentives for program operators or SDAs to participate in or provide funding for the JOBSTART demonstration.

As explained above, national performance standards for the JTPA system are established by the U.S. Department of Labor using seven measures.

These federal performance standards are passed on to the SDAs after governors adjust them for local conditions, using parameters specified by DOL.[17] Governors are required to take corrective action if the SDAs do not meet these performance standards. After a year, poorly performing SDAs are supposed to receive technical assistance (paid for by the 6 percent set-aside); after two years, the governor is expected to impose a reorganization plan on the SDA. The plan may bar specified service providers from receiving funds, restructure the PIC, or designate a new administrative entity. However, the 6 percent set-aside is also used by governors to provide incentive grants to SDAs that exceed their performance standards. The precise conditions for receipt of bonus funds are determined by the state; decisions about how the awarded funds will be used are either made by the state or left up to each SDA.

Because these financial rewards and penalties are built into the system at the local as well as the state level, JTPA staffs have a clear interest in ensuring that their contractors perform well and qualify the SDA for state incentive funds. Therefore, they adjust the state-required standards and use them to set performance goals or conditions of payment in contracts with individual training vendors. Thus, contractors are often required to meet higher standards than the SDA as a whole must meet.

An operator's failure to meet the contractually-required performance standards may lead to a reduction in or termination of funding in the next contract year and -- if the contract is "performance-based"[18] -- result in financial loss during the current contract year. However, it is not just the fear of financial loss that motivates contractors or SDAs; equally important are the rewards built into the system. Particularly in SDAs where bonus money is available for contractors who exceed performance goals, there is added incentive for program operators to achieve higher entered employment and positive termination rates than those specified in the contract.

Thus, the way JTPA performance standards are structured seems to drive the system toward achieving higher and higher entered employment and positive termination rates. This has a ratchet effect on setting standards in subsequent years since the national standards are recalculated every two years, based on actual performance during the previous cycle. If SDAs do consistently better than planned, they will be expected to perform at an even higher rate in the next cycle.

Because the JTPA system is geared toward high performance at a low cost -- and training programs for the hard-to-serve are likely to cost more and may result in a lower proportion of positive outcomes -- program operators that work with harder-to-employ groups may be at a competitive disadvantage unless local JTPA staffs are willing to alter the contractors' performance standards to reflect the group served. Recognizing these special circumstances, a number of technical assistance guides on JTPA performance standards urge SDAs to be flexible in setting their positive termination and cost per positive termination standards for programs serving young high school dropouts and other hard-to-employ groups.[19]

E. Recent Developments

For the reasons discussed above, the JTPA policy environment did not seem overwhelmingly favorable to the implementation of the JOBSTART demonstration when MDRC began the process of site selection in the spring of

1985. There were some encouraging signs, however. In particular, the documented failure of SDAs across the country to meet the youth expenditure targets in the JTPA legislation had attracted considerable attention, and a number of national organizations, as well as state and local policymakers, were trying to increase the level and quality of youth services in the system. The report produced by Grinker Associates on the implementation of JTPA found that SDAs have increased the percentage of funds spent on youths and have also taken some modest steps toward providing services to the more needy among the eligible population.[20]

Especially important was the emphasis given to developing the youth employment competency systems authorized by JTPA. These systems generally recognize competencies of three different types: pre-employment and work maturity skills, basic education skills, and job skills for specific occupations. These competencies are seen as key to increasing the youth positive termination rates and encouraging more innovative training strategies in the SDAs.

The early implementation reports on JTPA all indicated that PICs had been slow to develop competency measures. By late 1984, efforts were being made to provide PICs with technical assistance for developing these competency systems. Legislation passed in the summer of 1984 allowing SDAs to count the youths' attainment of competencies as an outcome measure in performance-based contracts further encouraged the development of competency systems. (Federal regulations recognizing the change were not issued until early 1985, however.) Previously, in performance-based contracts, contractors could only be paid for training-related placements.

One other roadblock, as noted earlier, has been the lack of approppriate data. Only in July 1986 were employment competencies added as a separate reporting item, although the JTPA legislation indicated that SDAs could include youths with documented competency gains in their positive termination rates. It is expected that the development of these systems and information on their use will encourage more SDAs to try innovative training strategies and to offer basic education, especially to high-risk groups.[21] The wider utilization of such systems is likely to facilitate the implementation of the JOBSTART and similar models within the JTPA system.

Also helpful to the implementation of the JOBSTART demonstration during the last year was the growing interest among the employment and training community in remedial or basic education. During 1985, policymakers and planners were encouraging local operators to include educational components in their Summer Youth Employment Programs, and legislation to that effect was introduced in Congress. By 1986, the U.S. Department of Labor had also endorsed the concept.[22]

Increasing attention was also being paid to the need for basic educational instruction in regular Title IIA programming. In particular, the greater availability of basic education curricula using individualized, competency-based and computer-assisted instruction, such as the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) developed by the Remediation and Training Institute, increased the potential pool of JOBSTART sites. The study by Grinker Associates found that in program year 1984, SDAs were expanding their use of basic or remedial education, although it remained a very small part of total programming.[23]

F. Incentives for JOBSTART Participation

These developments were likely to both increase interest in JOBSTART at the local SDA level and make it easier for training vendors to operate the demonstration under JTPA auspices. Specific aspects of the demonstration itself made it appealing to program operators and JTPA agencies, including the prestige associated with being part of a national demonstration; the opportunity to answer more definitively many key questions about what works for youth dropouts; and -- in a system which has limited funding available for technical assistance and program planning -- the opportunity to develop new program initiatives and receive technical assistance in program design and management. Further, although MDRC could not provide the operating funds for JOBSTART, it was able to provide $25,000 of corporate or foundation funds to each of the sites, and planned to help them develop supplemental funding if necessary.

Thus, although many JTPA policies and practices seemed to discourage participation in the JOBSTART demonstration, there were also compelling reasons why SDAs and program operators might want to join. The degree to which SDAs and program operators responded positively to MDRC's recruitment efforts is discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

LAUNCHING THE DEMONSTRATION

The process of JOBSTART site selection and development presented a number of challenges when MDRC began this phase of the demonstration in the spring of 1985. MDRC planned to recruit 10 to 15 sites to operate JOBSTART, each of which would need at least 200 JOBSTART-eligible youths. By a process of random assignment, half of the youths at each site would enter an experimental group, eligible for JOBSTART services; the other half would be designated as a control group, not eligible to receive such services. The number of sites, as well as the number to be enrolled at each site, was determined by the need to develop a large enough research sample to ensure that program impacts of the anticipated size could be detected with statistical reliability. Sites had to be recruited, moreover, at a time when MDRC could not provide them with operating funds, and when there were a number of impediments to mounting strategies such as JOBSTART in the JTPA system, as discussed in the previous chapter.

In order to provide the strongest test of the program model, MDRC hoped to recruit program operators experienced in running programs with the same components and for the same population as JOBSTART. This would help not only to eliminate start-up problems, but also to ensure that JOBSTART participants received instruction of proven quality. It was understood, however, that the universe of such programs in the current JTPA system was likely to be small, both for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter and because operators might be using alternative service strategies for dropout youths. Therefore, MDRC was prepared to enroll sites that could show evidence of the following:

- A history of strong program management, effective leadership and fiscal stability;
- Experience in running the JOBSTART program components or in working with the target population of young dropouts who are poor readers;
- The capacity to reach the random assignment goal, either by documenting previous success in recruiting high school dropouts, or by formulating plans for a new outreach strategy;
- The willingness and capacity to conform to the JOBSTART operating guidelines and make changes in current programs where necessary; and
- The willingness to abide by the research requirements of the demonstration, including random assignment and reporting responsibilities.

The first sections of this chapter discuss the process by which MDRC identified and developed sites for the demonstration, its success in meeting its site selection goals, and the implications for the research design. The concluding sections focus on the role that JTPA agencies and staffs played in launching the demonstration and examine why program operators, as well as local and state JTPA staffs, were receptive to JOBSTART despite the operational disincentives discussed in Chapter 2.

A. The Process of Site Development

Apart from the non-residential Job Corps locations, the process of developing JOBSTART sites reflected the decentralized nature of the JTPA system. At the national level, MDRC worked with a number of public interest groups involved with employment and training, including the National Governors' Association, the National Association of Counties, the National

League of Cities, the National Job Training Partnership, Inc., as well as the National Alliance of Business, which has also been instrumental in supporting information exchange among the JOBSTART sites. MDRC publicized JOBSTART through the newsletters, annual meetings and technical assistance conferences of these organizations, and worked with their staffs to identify both JTPA contractors that were running similar programs and local or state JTPA agencies that might have an interest in funding an innovative program for young dropouts. Efforts to identify school-based sites were made through professional education organizations, such as the Institute for Educational Leadership, the American Vocational Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of Great City Schools, and the American Association of School Administrators.

Below this level, the channels of approach varied considerably. In some cases, MDRC worked through states to identify potential sites and local SDAs interested in supporting JOBSTART; in others, the first approach was made through the local agency responsible for adminstering JTPA funds; in still others, the initial contact was an interested program operator. In total, about 70 to 80 program operators discussed participation with MDRC staff. Those ultimately enrolled in the demonstration were selected from a "short list" of about 20 to 25 programs that fit fairly well with the JOBSTART model and had expressed interest in participating.

Once a potential JOBSTART operator was identified, MDRC conducted an initial screening, usually by telephone, for interest in and suitability for the demonstration. This screening was followed by an assessment visit in which MDRC staff identified the specific areas that seemed to need modifications and began developing strategies to accomplish the necessary changes. MDRC staff continued to work with these potential sites on meeting the JOBSTART operating guidelines in subsequent visits and by telephone. (The kinds of changes these programs made are discussed in Chapter 4.) Where necessary, MDRC staff also helped program operators to win local JTPA support for the demonstration or to obtain supplemental funding from state JTPA sources or outside groups.

Only after several months of observation and negotiation -- when programs had demonstrated sufficient capacity and willingness to adapt to the JOBSTART model -- were they asked to submit a formal application to participate in the demonstration.

The process of developing the non-residential Job Corps sites was quite different from the procedure for other sites, reflecting the far greater degree of uniformity and centralization that characterizes the network of federally-administered Job Corps Centers. Both the national Office of the Job Corps and the Employment and Training Administration's research arm, the Office of Strategic Planning and Program Development, strongly endorsed the inclusion of the non-residential components of four Job Corps Centers in the demonstration. MDRC was thus able to work through the national Job Corps office to identify appropriate sites and explore interest in the demonstration.

The Job Corps director gave MDRC information on enrollee demographics and operating capacity of all the Job Corps Centers with non-residential programs and arranged for MDRC staff to meet with the regional Job Corps directors and their corporate and non-profit contractors. Negotiations on procedural changes and how to meet the research guidelines had to be worked out with each site, but the process was facilitated by the national office's decision to waive regulations and standard procedures that would have slowed down JOBSTART implementation. The national office was also willing to absorb the additional costs of recruiting enough youths to form a control group.

B. Overview of the JOBSTART Sites

1. Prior Experience

A total of 16 sites began participating in the JOBSTART demonstration.[1] (See Table 3.1.) These sites represent a mix of community-based organizations, school-based skills centers and non-residential components of Job Corps Centers. All seemed to be strong program operators, showing evidence of effective management, quality programming and financial stability.

However, MDRC's efforts to recruit sites that had experience both with JOBSTART services and the JOBSTART target population were less successful. Not surprisingly, considering the genesis of the JOBSTART model, the Job Corps Centers conformed most closely to the JOBSTART guidelines. Four of the other 12 sites are educational providers targeting young dropouts, but had little or no experience in brokering skills training for their enrollees. The remaining eight sites came into the demonstration with experience in the JOBSTART service mix, but youths had not traditionally been the primary target group in several of these sites.

As a result, most of the JOBSTART sites required considerable modifications in their program structures or enrollment patterns in order to conform to the JOBSTART model. This had implications for both the implementation and the evaluation of the JOBSTART demonstration:

TABLE 3.1

LOCATION, SDA NAME AND RANDOM ASSIGNMENT START DATE OF JOBSTART SITES

Agency Name	Location	Name of SDA	Random Assignment Start
Allentown Youth Services Consortium	Buffalo, NY	Buffalo/Cheektowaga/Tonawanda Consortium	June 1986
Atlanta Job Corps	Atlanta, GA	N/A	August 1986
Basic Skills Academy (BSA)	New York, NY	New York City	October 1986
Center for Employment Training (CET)	San Jose, CA	Santa Clara County	November 1985
Chicago Commons Association Business and Industrial Training Program	Chicago, IL	City of Chicago	March 1986
Connelley Skill Learning Center	Pittsburgh, PA	City of Pittsburgh	August 1985
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)	Hartford, CT	Hartford	April 1986
East Los Angeles Skill Center	Los Angeles, CA	City of Los Angeles	May 1986
El Centro Community College Job Training Center	Dallas, TX	City of Dallas	March 1986
Emily Griffith Opportunity School (EGOS)	Denver, CO	City and County of Denver	April 1986
Los Angeles Job Corps	Los Angeles, CA	N/A	August 1986
Phoenix Job Corps	Phoenix, AZ	N/A	June 1986
Sacramento Job Corps	Sacramento, CA	N/A	October 1986
SER - Jobs for Progress	Corpus Christi, TX	City of Corpus Christi/Nueces County	October 1985
SER - Jobs for Progress	Milwaukee, WI	Milwaukee County	April 1986
Stanly Technical College	Albemarle, NC	Centralina	November 1985

NOTES: N/A indicates not applicable because these Job Corps Centers are federally funded and operated by private contractors and are not part of the SDA system.

- First, because many of the sites required more changes than had been anticipated, the site development phase was extended and initiation of random assignment was sometimes delayed; and
- Second, because the start-up period was longer once sites were operational, the overall evaluation will cover a shorter period of operational maturity.

2. Services to Controls

A particularly problematic area of negotiation during the site development phase was the issue of services to controls. In developing the JOBSTART design, a basic assumption was that the targeted youths -- economically disadvantaged dropouts who were poor readers -- were unlikely to have access to alternative education and training programs. Ideally, the research design would require that operators not serve members of the control group either in JOBSTART or in other programs operated at their site for a minimum of two years, and not refer controls in any preferential way to other service providers.

Many sites found this to be an onerous burden. Where sites had trouble recruiting youths and filling available slots, having to turn away eligible applicants was extremely difficult, particularly if the site was under contractual obligation to the JTPA agency to enroll a specified number of youths. A number of the school-based sites believed that the service provisions for controls conflicted with their legal responsibility to serve anyone who wanted to enroll. In addition, in SDAs that were having difficulty meeting their youth expenditure goals, JTPA staff and other service providers were reluctant to turn youths away without referring them to other service programs.

Recognizing these difficulties, MDRC was able to negotiate with JOBSTART operators on a site-by-site basis, winning agreement that JOBSTART operators would exclude controls from JOBSTART services and refrain from concerted efforts to enroll them in other programs. Referral to less comprehensive and intensive programs, such as GED preparation, was allowed.

3. *Funding*

Operating funds for JOBSTART sites are provided from a combination of sources. As anticipated, the bulk of the operating costs are provided through locally-awarded JTPA funds as part of the normal contracting process in JTPA service delivery areas. Most of the JTPA funding comes from the SDAs' 78 percent allocation, but a few SDAs have used their share of state-allocated 8 percent funds to support JOBSTART programs. (Table 3.2 shows funding sources for the JOBSTART sites.) In some cases, the JTPA contracts do not distinguish between JOBSTART and other program activities at the site. (See Chapter 5 for details on the contracting process.) Incremental funding from local JTPA sources across all sites was in excess of $1.2 million.

Nine of the JOBSTART sites have also been awarded a special grant from the state-controlled 8 percent set-asides reserved for governors to promote linkages between training and educational programs. MDRC was instrumental in leveraging these grants -- which range from $50,000 to $128,000 per site and total $756,000 -- for the JOBSTART projects. Two other sites are using 8 percent funds for JOBSTART, although the state did not make specific awards to the demonstration.

Every site has also been awarded a $25,000 grant from corporate and foundation contributions made to MDRC. This grant is intended to help defray the additional costs of operating the demonstration program,

TABLE 3.2

FUNDING SOURCES FOR JOBSTART SITES

Site	JTPA Title IIA Funding			Other	$25,000 Corporate and Foundation Grants Awarded Through MDRC
	78%[a]	Local 8%[b]	State 8%[c]		
Allentown	x		o		o
BSA (pilot phase)	o			A, B, C	
BSA			o	A, B, C	o
CET	x		o	C	o
Chicago Commons	o		o		o
Connelley		o	x	A, B	o
CREC	o		x	C	o
East L.A.		o	o	A	o
EGOS		o	o	A	o
El Centro		o	o	A	o
SER-Corpus Christi	o		o		o
SER-Milwaukee	x				o
Stanly Tech	o		o	A	o

KEY:
x indicates existing funding designated for JOBSTART
o indicates supplemental funding secured for JOBSTART
"A" includes in-kind school contributions or other education funds
"B" includes contributions from local foundations or other organizations
"C" includes other federal, state, or local monies

NOTES: [a] 78% of JTPA Title IIA funds are allocated by formula to states.

[b] 8% of a state's JTPA Title IIA allocation is reserved for coordination with education programs. Local 8% funding refers to that portion which is distributed, at state discretion, to local service delivery areas to spend on projects of their choice.

[c] State 8% funding refers to the portion of the 8% education set-aside distributed directly by a state to specific programs or projects.

including those imposed by the research requirements for data collection and recruitment of controls.

A number of sites are using other state or local funds to supplement the funds received from JTPA and corporate or foundation sponsors of the demonstration. In some cases, these funds were made available specifically for JOBSTART; in other cases, they are part of the normal operating budget which the JOBSTART operator has decided to use for JOBSTART enrollees. The school-based sites are also providing in-kind matches to pay for the cost of salaries, rent and equipment.

JOBSTART is a more expensive program than those typically run at these sites in the current JTPA environment, given that additional money has come to JOBSTART from corporate and foundation contributions, state funds and other resources. However, it is difficult at this point to estimate the total funding available for, or the costs of, the demonstration because many of the JTPA contracts at the JOBSTART sites cover other program activities and service groups in addition to JOBSTART -- and others do not include support services or other costs. Data collected as part of the benefit-cost analysis will enable determination of program costs.

C. Length of the Development Phase

The length of time required to identify and develop sites for the JOBSTART demonstration varied from a minimum of six months to over a year. The phase-in of sites also took over a year. The first site began random assignment in August 1985 and the last in October 1986.

A number of factors explain the extended development phase in the JOBSTART demonstration:

- First, more sites than expected required substantial modifications in their program designs. To reduce start-up effects in the study as a whole, MDRC encouraged sites to delay random assignment until new elements were in place and staff had sufficient time to adjust to them.

- Second, sites frequently had to go through complicated and time-consuming procedures to obtain JOBSTART funding. Community-based organizations were particularly vulnerable to problems caused by delays in receiving funding since they often did not have a reserve of funds to cover such expenses as hiring new staff. School-based sites, on the other hand, were better able to cover expenses with other accounts when delays ensued.

- Third, start-up had to be synchronized with the funding and enrollment patterns at each site and with the JTPA program year. While programs structured on an open-entry/open-exit basis could enroll JOBSTART students at any time, those with fixed cycles of services could only begin at specified intervals. In addition, if a site was unable to "carry" enrollees into the next JTPA program year, random assignment had to take place early in the year to allow students to complete training before the contract ran out.

- Fourth, the protracted negotiations over services to controls delayed program implementation at a number of sites.

The next chapter analyzes other issues concerning program start-up and provides information on the program modifications made by sites for the JOBSTART demonstration.

D. The JTPA Role in the Demonstration

The fact that 12 JOBSTART sites -- excluding the four Job Corp locations -- are operating the program with JTPA Title II funding represents an impressive accomplishment, given the disincentives for serving the JOBSTART target group in the JTPA system.[2]

Certain innovative JTPA agencies are facilitating the implementation of the demonstration in a variety of ways. JTPA staffs in all of the SDAs where JOBSTART sites are located have given their approval for each site's participation in the demonstration, and some have earmarked funding specifically for JOBSTART. In certain cases, local JTPA staff have played an active role in the site identification and selection process, been instrumental in helping to develop the necessary program modifications, and monitored program implementation in its early months. JOBSTART has also received the endorsement of a number of states: as noted, JTPA resources from governors' discretionary funds are being used in all but one non-Job Corps site. In two states, the funds were awarded to the JOBSTART program through a request-for-proposals (RFP) competition; in four, the JOBSTART award was made through a non-competitive funding process. In two others, where 8 percent funds were typically awarded to the site each year, the site operator decided to use them for JOBSTART. In a number of these states, as well as in others where funding was not available, state staffs -- as in the case of local JTPA staffs -- were instrumental in developing support and funding for JOBSTART and identifying appropriate sites.

In about half of the locations -- excluding Job Corps sites -- where JOBSTART is being run (Los Angeles; Albemarle, North Carolina; Denver; Pittsburgh; and Chicago), local JTPA staffs were instrumental in developing the JOBSTART sites. In these cases, the PIC or the local government agency in charge of JTPA -- sometimes in collaboration with other local groups -- worked closely with MDRC to identify and nurture a site, committed itself at an early point to provide funding, and otherwise facilitated the implementation of the JOBSTART program. In a few of these locations, MDRC was asked by the JTPA staff to choose the most appropriate program among its training vendors, or to develop the specifications for an RFP or a sole source contract that would meet the JOBSTART guidelines. In Hartford, the

PIC provided the initial contact with the site, but the primary developmental work was done by the Capital Region Education Council, the community-based organization which became the JOBSTART operator.

In other instances, interest in JOBSTART at the state level helped to bring sites into the demonstration. Thus, the availability of state funds was used to leverage interest in JOBSTART at the local level in Denver, Dallas and Corpus Christi. Elsewhere, state funding was used to supplement local JTPA funding for JOBSTART, but local interest was not contingent on the state's commitment of funds.

In the remaining localities (Buffalo, San Jose, Milwaukee, New York City), MDRC worked with program operators to develop interest in the demonstration, and then approached the local JTPA agency. The degree of support provided by JTPA staffs in these sites varied considerably, although all endorsed the demonstration.

E. Reasons for Participating in JOBSTART

An explanation of why program operators and JTPA staffs were interested in JOBSTART clarifies JOBSTART's importance both as a program for high school dropouts and as a social experiment. Discussions with JOBSTART operators and JTPA officials at the state and local levels suggest that several motives were instrumental in the decision to participate in or support the demonstration.

1. The Local Operator's Perspective

At many sites, JOBSTART was seen as an opportunity to strengthen current program offerings by testing new approaches, refining familiar ones, experimenting with enriched or enhanced services, or working with a different target group. Some welcomed additional funding, and many valued the prestige attached to being part of a national demonstration. A few viewed the demonstration as an opportunity to validate what their program had been doing in recent years. Most, however, regarded JOBSTART as an opportunity for program and staff development, and were willing to comply with random assignment and the other research responsibilities in order to contribute to the development of public policy.

Sites were also attracted by the opportunities for technical assistance provided through MDRC's developmental efforts and contacts with other JOBSTART operators. In addition to the on-site work done by its own staff, MDRC arranged for the JOBSTART sites to be trained in recruitment and motivation strategies by 70001 Ltd., a national youth employment organization that works extensively with dropout youths, and periodically brought staff from the sites together at conferences to exchange knowledge and ideas on operational strategies. JOBSTART staff have also developed their own informal networks of information exchange. For example, Allentown staff from Buffalo visited Center for Employment Training staff in San Jose; the Basic Skills Academy in New York City helped train CREC staff in Hartford on computer-assisted curriculum procedures; and staff from the Phoenix Job Corps site visited the Corpus Christi SER site to get advice on recruitment strategies.

2. The SDA Perspective

For JTPA officials, JOBSTART offered many of the same attractions. In general, they wanted better answers to questions about the most effective ways to serve dropouts and youths who are poor readers, and sought the national recognition that participation in the demonstration would bring.

Local JTPA staffs were most supportive of JOBSTART when there was a pre-existing commitment to target services to dropouts or youths, or a special interest in linking basic education with skills training. Three SDAs, discussed below, became involved in JOBSTART because of a growing concern about the high proportion of JTPA applicants and enrollees who were deficient in basic skills. In these SDAs, officials saw JOBSTART not just as a special program for teenage dropouts, but as a general strategy that has application to a much broader spectrum of the JTPA-eligible population.

In Corpus Christi, JTPA officials had endorsed the JOBSTART concept even before they were approached about the demonstration. SDA statistics in program year 1984 indicated that about two-thirds of JTPA applicants tested were reading below the sixth-grade level, whether or not they had a high school diploma. The serious job placement and retention problems that resulted led the PIC to develop an RFP for a program to provide basic education, occupational skills training, and intensive support services for high school dropouts and high school graduates who were performing poorly. The training vendor who was awarded the funds became the JOBSTART operator after supplemental state funding was arranged.

In the SDA for Hartford, Connecticut, JOBSTART was also endorsed as part of a larger drive to refocus JTPA training to provide instruction in basic education. Key officials on the PIC -- the policy arm of the local JTPA system -- had long-standing concerns about the provision of services to high-risk youths. These concerns were reinforced by growing evidence that JTPA enrollees' deficiencies in basic skills were undermining training efforts in the advanced technology industries that were a staple of the local economy. Once the JOBSTART model had been developed at CREC, staff at the Hartford Employment Resource Development Agency (ERDA) -- the administrative entity for JTPA -- also became interested in the program. Believing that JOBSTART can serve as a model in developing a "feeder" system of basic education courses into skills training, ERDA staff have designed a new system of payment and performance standards to facilitate the JOBSTART implementation.

Similarly, the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training in Chicago became interested in JOBSTART out of concern about basic skills deficiencies of both youth and adult enrollees and the failure of JTPA contractors to address this problem: 1985 statistics indicated that one-third of the JTPA enrollees lacked the basic skills that employers considered critical for entry-level jobs. To push training vendors to do more in program year 1986, all JTPA contractors must show how they plan to address educational deficiencies in their programs when they apply for funds. Staff regard JOBSTART as an opportunity to test the strategy of coupling basic education directly with skills training.

In other SDAs, JOBSTART has gained importance as a specialized program to help young dropouts rather than as a more general approach to linking basic education and skills training. The opportunity to operate the demonstration in school-based sites was a key factor in the commitment of funds in these areas, because the involvement of the local school system is seen as critical to the development of an approach to fight the dropout problem. In Denver, for example, JOBSTART is being funded as part of a state-wide political initiative to improve dropout prevention and dropout reclamation strategies in the public school system. In Pittsburgh, JOBSTART represents the collaborative efforts of a local business intermediary group (the

Allegheny Conference on Community Development), the JTPA system and the public school system to address the dropout problem. In Los Angeles, the availability of local 8 percent funding for JOBSTART was contingent upon the involvement of the school system in the project. The implementation of JOBSTART at this site was also seen as an opportunity to test the new youth employment competency system which had been developed by the PIC in conjunction with the local school system.

JTPA staffs in other SDAs are willing to support contractors' participation in JOBSTART, but have raised concerns about the demonstration's probable effects on costs, performance and youth enrollment levels. In contrast to the JTPA staffs cited above, they have been less active in the development or implementation of JOBSTART at the demonstration sites.

3. The State Perspective

The emphasis in JOBSTART on combining basic education and skills training made the state 8 percent set-aside a natural source of funds for JOBSTART sites. In addition, the earmarking of 8 percent set-aside funds for JOBSTART at the state level generally reflected a commitment to funding innovative programs or to improving services for high-risk groups, including dropouts. The demonstration nature of the project with its strong research component was another compelling reason for many states to fund JOBSTART.

Stanly Technical College in Albemarle, North Carolina was awarded $91,000 from the state 8 percent set-aside through an RFP process run by the State Division of Community Colleges, the only award made under the category reserved for program innovation. JOBSTART was favorably viewed given the state's interest in developing competency-based training programs, providing pre-GED training for youths under the age of 21, and encouraging community colleges to work with a younger clientele.

In Denver, the Governor's Job Training Office was the catalyst behind the JOBSTART demonstration. Dropouts have been a policy priority at the state level in Colorado for several years. In late 1984, the governor convened a special task force to study the problem; the following year, the state legislature enacted educational reform legislation that specifically addressed the issue. To help implement the legislation, a portion of the governor's 8 percent set-aside was reserved to fund dropout prevention and reclamation projects: $50,000 was awarded to JOBSTART. As in North Carolina, the state views JOBSTART as providing an opportunity to help the public school system develop effective strategies for attacking the dropout problem and to facilitate the implementation of competency-based training systems.

The two JOBSTART sites in New York (Allentown and the Basic Skills Academy) successfully competed for 8 percent funding through the State Education and Employment Demonstrations (SEED) program. The awards were for $66,000 and $82,000, respectively. The SEED program funds innovative approaches to improve the education and employment of those most in need of services, including at-risk youths and unemployed adults. The JOBSTART program was particularly attractive given the state's emphasis on "multi-service centers using the latest learning technologies to provide out-of-school youths and adults with a wide-range of educational, training, counseling, and placement services."[3]

In California, the $50,000 awarded by the State Job Training Coordinating Council to each of two JOBSTART sites reflects the Council's interest in targeting funds to high-risk youths. Concern about the special employment problems faced by this group led the Council to set up a Youth Subcommittee in 1984. It was charged with preparing a report to delineate the nature of the problem, review what was known about successful strategies to combat it, and recommend ways for the Council to address the issue in setting state JTPA policy. The commitment of funds for JOBSTART was one way of implementing those recommendations, which included targeting all JTPA funds to high-risk groups, providing incentives to encourage more intensive training, and developing better linkages of remedial education with training.[4]

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs was able to provide $114,000 for the Chicago JOBSTART site out of unexpended JTPA 8 percent carry-over money that came under its jurisdiction. These funds, which are traditionally used to support demonstrations, gather labor market information and cover other administrative costs, represent a highly flexible source of funding for local programs.

In Texas, JOBSTART provides a way to respond to the emphasis in the state's youth policy on program models for at-risk groups, coordination between education and employment training, and the development of competency-based training. JOBSTART is also viewed as a useful complement to two other youth initiatives funded by the state: an in-school dropout prevention program and a residential youth conservation corps project. State funding comes through the Texas Department of Community Affairs from the 20 percent of the 8 percent set-aside reserved for coordination efforts; starting in 1985, the remainder of the 8 percent set-aside in Texas is allocated to SDAs to support programs targeting at-risk and hard-to-serve youths. Staff at the Department of Community Affairs have not only provided funds for JOBSTART, but also reviewed SDA plans and other documents to identify existing programs that might serve as JOBSTART sites and visited them with MDRC staff. The state has provided $128,000 to the Corpus Christi site and $125,000 to the Dallas site.

4. Reasons for Nonparticipation

The JOBSTART sites and the SDAs and states that are funding them do not, of course, represent the universe of program operators or JTPA agencies that serve dropout youths or who are interested in doing so. Some interested sites could not be considered for inclusion in the demonstration because their service philosophy or program models could not be easily adapted to conform to the JOBSTART guidelines. Still others were in areas where the potential pool of JOBSTART enrollees was too small for the research design. Others were unwilling to accept random assignment and the requirement not to serve the control group. Two additional states were willing to commit funds to JOBSTART, but no interested or appropriate site could be identified, despite the joint efforts of state JTPA and MDRC staffs.

CHAPTER 4

OVERVIEW OF THE JOBSTART SITES

This chapter presents an overview of the sites in the JOBSTART demonstration and explores challenges that they faced in implementing JOBSTART. It first examines the types of agencies or organizations that are operating JOBSTART and the variations in program structure and content across sites. Then it discusses the prior experience sites have had in working with the target population and in providing the JOBSTART components. Finally, the chapter examines the changes that sites had to make in their usual operations for JOBSTART, and discusses how this and other factors affected program start-up.

A. Types of Agencies Operating JOBSTART

Both educational and skills training providers are responsible for administering JOBSTART at demonstration sites. Table 4.1 shows that JOBSTART is operated by schools at five sites and by community-based organizations at seven; at four sites, JOBSTART is run as the non-residential component of Job Corps Centers. The school-based sites include both community colleges and secondary schools. In one case, JOBSTART is administered by a community-based organization that is also accredited as an alternative school program -- the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) in Hartford, Connecticut. Some of the organizations that operate JOBSTART are education providers targeting youths and others are multi-service skills centers offering basic education as part of their service mix.

TABLE 4.1

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOBSTART SITES

Site	Type of Agency	Target Population	Total Annual Enrollment	Planned Number of JOBSTART Experimentals	JOBSTART Enrollment as Percentage of Total Enrollment[a]
Allentown	CBO	dropouts, 17-21	400	100	25
Atlanta Job Corps	Non-residential component of Job Corps	low-income, unemployed youth, 16-21	340 residential; 190 non-residential	100	20
BSA	CBO	dropouts, 16-22	420	100	25
CET	CBO	youth (40%) and adults (60%); average age = 26	775	100	15
Chicago Commons	CBO	youth (30%) and adults (70%)	220	100	45
Connelley	Adult Vocational School	individuals 17 and older	1000	120	10
CREC	CBO	dropouts, 17-21	400	100	25
East L.A.	Adult Vocational School	adults, youth dropouts and potential dropouts	500	100	20
EGOS	Adult Vocational School	out-of-school youth and adults; average age=25	15,000[b]	120	5
El Centro	Community College	individuals 17 and older	500	100	20
Los Angeles Job Corps	Non-residential component of Job Corps	low-income, unemployed youth, 16-21	375 residential; 375 non-residential	100	15
Phoenix Job Corps	Non-residential component of Job Corps	low income, unemployed youth, 16-21	200 residential; 200 non-residential	100	25

(continued)

TABLE 4.1 (continued)

Site	Type of Agency	Target Population	Total Annual Enrollment	Planned Number of JOBSTART Experimentals	JOBSTART Enrollment as Percentage of Total Enrollment[a]
Sacramento Job Corps	Non-residential component of Job Corps	low income, unemployed youth, 16-21	275 residential; 120 non-residential	100	25
SER - Corpus Christi	CBO	dropouts and low-functioning high school graduates	120	100	80
SER - Milwaukee	CBO	adults and in-and-out of school youth, 16-21	450	100	20
Stanly Tech	Community College	individuals 17 and older	1200	100	10

SOURCE: Program records and staff interviews.

NOTES: [a] Percentages are rounded to the nearest 5%.

[b] Two thousand students are enrolled at any point in time.

All the sites are experienced program operators with good performance records and histories of institutional stability. Each has proven adaptable to the changing policy environment as well as to the changing labor market conditions in their local areas. All have established strong reputations in their communities and had the support of the local JTPA agency in embarking on the demonstration.

1. The Job Corps Sites

The non-residential components of the four Job Corps Centers in JOBSTART (Atlanta, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Sacramento) form a special subset of the JOBSTART sites for a number of reasons. First, because they are not part of the service delivery system funded under Title IIA of JTPA, these sites are administered quite differently. Their funding comes from the national Office of the Job Corps, and three of the four are operated by private, for-profit corporations. Their administration is more closely governed by federal regulations, and their services are more standardized than at other JOBSTART sites.

Second, because these JOBSTART sites are attached to Job Corps residential centers, enrollees have access to a much broader array of services and facilities than at other JOBSTART sites. These include the opportunity to obtain on-site health care, to participate in team and individual sports and to join "elective classes," such as arts and crafts and drivers' education. Three meals a day are available. In addition, compared to the other JOBSTART sites, the Job Corps sites offer more financial assistance and incentive payments. Enrollees are paid a basic allowance of $40 per month, which increases to $80 by the sixth month of enrollment. Corps members also receive clothing allowances during the first, third and sixth months of enrollment. In addition, each month, $75 is placed in an "escrow" account set up for each trainee (which is forfeited by program departure before the end of six months). Within six months, a Job Corps enrollee can be paid as much as $1,000, and the payment schedule increases thereafter. In contrast, the needs-based payments available at most of the JOBSTART sites total between $650 and $860 over six months. Only SER in Corpus Christi provides a total package equal to the Job Corps payments: its $8 per diem payment would total $1,040 over six months.

Third, because the JOBSTART program model was largely based on the mix of services already offered by Job Corps Centers, these sites had extensive experience with all the JOBSTART components and with the target population; they did not have to modify their programs in order to participate. Except for the need to recruit more youths and to incorporate random assignment, operating JOBSTART was business as usual at the four Job Corps Centers.

B. Variations in Program Structure

As required by the JOBSTART operating guidelines, all the JOBSTART sites are providing a minimum of 500 hours of classroom instruction in occupational skills and 200 hours of basic education, a range of support services, and job placement assistance. Within these parameters, however, there is considerable diversity across the sites in both the kinds of services that are offered and in the way in which service delivery is structured.

As discussed below, service delivery systems of the different JOBSTART sites vary according to whether:

- the education and training components are offered concurrently or in a sequence;

- all the education and training services are provided by program staff or some are brokered from other service providers;

- classes are operated on a fixed cycle or an open-entry/open-exit basis; and

- the dropout youths are combined in classes with older or more educationally advanced students, or taught in separate classes.

(Table 4.2 shows variations by site.)

It is worth repeating that sites were allowed to vary in these ways because there was no good evidence to indicate that one approach was better than another, and because it was also recognized that all these approaches are routinely utilized in the field. In this respect, the mixture of sites in JOBSTART is probably typical of the universe of such programs nationwide.

However, the different strategies may have distinct strengths and weaknesses. In the later implementation analysis of JOBSTART, it will be helpful to consider how program structure affects: students' access to a range of training options; the availability of training when students seek it; the length of time students spend in the program; and the ability of students to absorb the course material and to become proficient in the skill area.

1. Concurrent versus Sequential Programming

The 12 sites that are not attached to the Job Corp Centers are evenly divided into sequential and concurrent programs with six offering basic education before skills training, and six providing the two simultaneously.[1] The Job Corps sites all offer concurrent programming,

TABLE 4.2

SELECTED PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS AT JOBSTART SITES

Site	Sequence of Components	Program Schedule	Location of Occupational Training	Type of Computer-Assisted Education System	Scheduled Length of Program Day [a]
Allentown	sequential	open entry/exit	brokered	CCP[b]	4
Atlanta Job Corps	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	varied	8
BSA	sequential	open entry/exit	brokered	CCP[b]	4
CET	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	none	7
Chicago Commons	concurrent	fixed cycle	on-site	none	7-8
Connelley	concurrent	fixed cycle	on-site	CCC[c]	6
CREC	sequential	open entry/exit	brokered	CCP[b]	4
East L.A.	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	none	6
EGOS	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	LUCI[d]	5-6
El Centro	sequential	open entry/exit	on-site	none	6
Los Angeles Job Corps	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	none	8
Phoenix Job Corps	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	PLATO[e]	8
Sacramento Job Corps	concurrent	open entry/exit	on-site	none	8
SER-Corpus Christi	concurrent	fixed cycle	on-site	PLATO[e]	6
SER-Milwaukee	sequential	open entry/exit	on site/brokered	CCP[b]	3
Stanly Tech	sequential	open entry/exit	on-site	PLATO[e]	6

(continued)

TABLE 4.2 (continued)

SOURCE: Program records and staff interviews.

NOTES: [a] The scheduled hours may vary on some days and may include lunch periods and other non-class activities.

[b] Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) Learning Centers are libraries of educational materials that include video, audio, pencil and paper and computer alternatives for instruction in math and reading from beginning literacy levels through GED and college preparation materials. CCP centers often include PLATO and CCC as alternative sequences.

[c] Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) is a competency-based software basic education instruction system which includes an extensive assessment sequence, an ongoing record of time on task, and a record of the student's accuracy of response for each lesson.

[d] LUCI is a management system that utilizes computer softwars to record student responses in reading sequences, maintain records and track student progress through accompanying pencil and paper materials.

[e] The PLATO Fair Break System is a computerized competency-based reading and mathematics instruction system adapted from an interdisciplinary comprehensive system.

although some students need additional instruction in basic education before entering skills training components. (See Table 4.3.)

The rationale for sequencing occupational training after educational instruction is the expectation that -- as poorer readers -- JOBSTART youths will need remedial work before they are able to handle the written material in a training curriculum. Another argument for this sequencing is that providing education prior to skills training widens the range of available training options. In contrast, a different school of thought argues that offering the two components concurrently is preferable because it allows instruction in one area to reinforce the other. In addition, concurrent training may be more attractive to dropout youths, many of whom have had problems in educational settings.

Concurrent and sequential approaches to programming present additional advantages and disadvantages. With concurrent programming, students are scheduled to spend six to eight hours per day in classes. A class day of this length might prove too intensive and result in higher attrition rates than if students spend fewer hours in class per day. In addition, staffs at many sites with concurrent scheduling found it difficult to plan individual counseling sessions, tutorials, or other special events for the JOBSTART youths. In some cases, students were taken out of vocational training in order to engage in these activities, making it even more difficult for the youths to keep up with their work. On the other hand, by offering more variety and greater opportunity for students to experience the connection between educational advancement and work, these programs may be more satisfying than sequential programs and more easily interest the youths in the JOBSTART program.

TABLE 4.3

ENTRY SCHEDULE AND SEQUENCE OF COMPONENTS AT JOBSTART SITES

	Sequence of Components	
Entry Schedule	Concurrent	Sequential
Open Entry/Exit	Atlanta Job Corps CET EGOS East L.A. Skills Center Los Angeles Job Corps Phoenix Job Corps Sacramento Job Corps	Allentown BSA CREC El Centro SER - Milwaukee Stanly Tech
Fixed Cycle	Chicago Commons Connelley SER - Corpus Christi	

Sequential sites face challenges of a somewhat different order. The major concern at these sites is whether they will be able to move students successfully into skills training. Two issues in particular seem pertinent: whether enrollees can be kept in the program long enough to enable them to meet the entry criteria for skills training and whether the start of skills training can be synchronized with the end of educational instruction. Major delays may result in attrition. In addition, although training is generally less intensive in the sequential sites -- involving three to four hours of class per day -- the total months spent in training can be longer than at concurrent sites.

2. Brokering Services

Four of the sequential sites are education providers that will "broker" occupational training, that is, supply it through outside training vendors rather than on their own.[2] The other two sequential sites, as well as all the concurrent sites, will move students from the education component into their own on-site occupational skills courses. None of the sites are using the educational services of other agencies. (One program proposing this arrangement pursued the possibility of participating in the demonstration, but did not submit an application.)

Sites that both broker occupational skills training with outside providers and offer it after an educational component face another set of challenges:

- Can the JOBSTART operators ensure that a sufficient number of training slots will be available at the time their students complete the educational component?
- Can they influence the quality of training or support services of outside vendors sufficiently to conform to the JOBSTART model?

- Can they set up a system to monitor the progress of JOBSTART students in a brokered training component and provide additional assistance when needed? Will they be able to supplement the support services provided by the training vendor, if necessary?
- Will they assume responsibility for job placement if the training vendor fails to do so?

3. Fixed Cycle versus Open-Entry/Open-Exit Programming

Another key variable in the JOBSTART service design is whether the components are scheduled on an open-entry/open-exit or a fixed cycle basis. In an open-entry/open-exit system, students start training at any time and move through the courses at their own pace rather than as part of a group; in a fixed cycle schedule, students begin and end training at specified intervals. Three of the sites -- all providing concurrent training (Chicago Commons, SER in Corpus Christi, and Connelley Skill Learning Center) -- are operating both the educational and the occupational training components of JOBSTART on a fixed cycle basis. At these sites, both components run only for a specified number of weeks. Elsewhere, students can enter the educational classes at any time. Occupational skills training, on the other hand, is more commonly offered with fixed starting and ending dates. The Center for Employment Training (CET) in San Jose is the only concurrent site where skills training is run on an open-entry/open-exit basis.

An open-entry/exit approach seems particularly well-suited for the JOBSTART population because the youths may have a sporadic attendance record and need additional time to complete the course material. Fixed cycle courses, on the other hand, are easier for administrators to schedule and monitor. Moreover, open-ended training may be limited in duration in practice if funding constraints or contractual obligations require students to be terminated at the end of a funding period.

4. "Mainstreaming" the JOBSTART Enrollees

The JOBSTART sites either "mainstream," that is, combine JOBSTART students in classes with other students -- frequently adults, or enroll them in separate classes. The choice reflects both logistical constraints (staffing and physical capacity) and philosophical commitment. Staff at sites that have traditionally targeted services to an adult population or to youth groups with higher reading levels believe that their courses are equally appropriate for youths and adults; further, they caution against stigmatizing JOBSTART students in any way. They also argue that youths will be less likely to engage in disruptive behavior if they are in classes with older students, and will benefit from having more serious students to serve as role models. A few sites have separated the youths from adults in the educational component for logistical reasons, but plan to mainstream them in the skills training courses.

Among the sites that have traditionally targeted their services to youths, two (El Centro Community College in Dallas and Allentown in Buffalo) plan to keep JOBSTART youths separate from their other youth target groups in the educational component. Allentown has chosen to create a distinct class for JOBSTART enrollees in the first few months, primarily because staff fear that mixing the JOBSTART youths with other students -- an ex-offender youth group -- might prove disruptive for JOBSTART enrollees. Staff also want to create a sense of group identity among JOBSTART students, and feel that separate classes will help them bond to each other and to the staff. Other sites are attempting to create this sense of group identity by planning extracurricular activities for JOBSTART youths (EGOS in Denver, CREC in Hartford, SER in Corpus Christi) or involving them in a peer recruitment effort (El Centro Community College in Dallas).

C. Variations in Program Content

The demonstration sites also vary in the eligibility criteria as well as in the types of services provided under the JOBSTART rubric. The key variations are summarized below:

1. Eligibility Criteria

To ensure that JOBSTART services would be reserved for the more disadvantaged segments of the youth population, MDRC restricted eligibility to young dropouts reading below the eighth-grade level. Most sites also imposed a "floor," generally a fifth-grade reading level, believing that individuals reading below that level would be unlikely to keep up with the skills training curricula at concurrent sites or to reach the required entry criteria for skills training in the time allowed at sequential sites. Having recognized that this relatively narrow range of reading levels posed problems for recruiters at the early-starting sites, MDRC subsequently allowed up to 20 percent of the random assignment sample at each site to be composed of individuals who read between the eighth- and ninth-grade levels.

2. Basic Education

All the JOBSTART sites provide educational instruction that is self-paced, individualized and competency-based. The approach at Chicago Commons and the Center for Employment Training in San Jose is somewhat unusual in that these sites focus on developing the specific educational skills required in the students' chosen lines of work as opposed to the basic skills and general knowledge usually emphasized in adult education or GED preparation. CET, for example, encourages JOBSTART enrollees to participate in special GED classes, but attendance is not mandatory.

As indicated in Table 4.2, educational instruction is computer-assisted at the majority of the JOBSTART sites. About a quarter of the sites use computer sequences as the primary instruction mode; elsewhere, computers are used for supplementary drill and practice, or to direct students and staff to appropriate sequences in a comprehensive curriculum.

3. Occupational Skills Training

The kinds of training available to JOBSTART enrollees also vary by site. The smaller organizations, such as SER in Corpus Christi, provide a much narrower range of options. However, many courses offered at large institutions would not, in fact, be appropriate for JOBSTART enrollees either because they take more than a year or less than 500 hours to complete, or because they demand credentials at entry that JOBSTART enrollees do not have.

4. Linking Education and Training

A key issue in the implementation of JOBSTART is the degree to which sites will be able to integrate the education and training components. A number of sites seek to link them by creating ties with private sector employers, as discussed below.

This integration may be easier where the components are offered concurrently. As indicated above, Chicago Commons and the Center for

Employment Training address educational deficiencies in the context of skills training classes. El Centro Community College takes a similar approach in a supplemental lab, available two hours a week, where staff create math problems or select reading materials that relate directly to the students' occupational skills training areas. SER in Corpus Christi takes the less common approach of hiring instructors qualified to teach both vocational and remedial education classes; JOBSTART participants take both types of classes from the same instructor.

To link education and training, sequential sites plan to familiarize students with available training options and entry criteria for specific fields or vendors at the start of education classes.

5. Support Services

Both MDRC and the JOBSTART operators believe that building a strong system of support services for JOBSTART enrollees is critical to the success of the demonstration. Support services are needed to combat the many situational problems that interfere with youths' ability to participate in a lengthy training program, to increase the youths' motivation, and to provide additional incentives for program participation.

Given the degree of economic disadvantage of the JOBSTART population and the fact that many enrollees have young children, the availability of financial support may be a critical factor in recruiting and retaining JOBSTART youths. However, the availability of financial assistance is limited under JTPA. In addition to the Job Corps sites, already discussed, eight JOBSTART sites are providing needs-based payments, ranging from a weekly maximum of $25 to $40. These payments are generally linked to hourly attendance. To provide additional incentives, three sites are offering special bonus payments for students with good attendance records or good grades. (See Table 4.4 for a breakdown by site.)

Four of the sites -- or one-quarter of all sites in the demonstration -- do not provide any financial assistance to JOBSTART enrollees. At some sites, PIC policy prohibits such payments; at others, staff are reluctant to provide such assistance to JOBSTART enrollees if other students do not receive it.

On-site capacity and staff experience in delivering support services varied considerably across the sites at the start of the demonstration. With one exception, the JOBSTART operators supply non-financial support services themselves or direct students to appropriate social service agencies. The exception is EGOS in Denver, where the SDA contracts with a community-based organization to provide support services for all JTPA enrollees. At EGOS, JOBSTART enrollees are also referred to this agency for help with medical problems, day-care arrangements and other support service needs.

6. Placement Services/Links to the Private Sector

The JOBSTART model emphasizes the importance of job development and job placement assistance for JOBSTART enrollees. Most sites planned to do their own placement. But in Corpus Christi, the JTPA agency that funds the demonstration at SER subcontracted the placement responsibility to the local employment service agency, the Texas Employment Commission. With the exception of Allentown in Buffalo, placement activity at the JOBSTART sites with brokered skills training is handled primarily by the training vendor.

Most sites develop on-going contacts between students and local employers to facilitate placement. Employers come and speak with the

TABLE 4.4

NEEDS-BASED AND INCENTIVE PAYMENTS, BY JOBSTART SITE

Site	Description of Payments
Allentown	$1-2 per hour of attendance, plus transportation passes
Atlanta Job Corps	$40 per month allowance increases to $60 at three months, $80 at six months; merit raises can increase the monthly allowance to $100 per month after six months. Additional payments of $75 per month are accrued if an enrollee remains for at least six months; accrual allowance increases to $100 per month after six months. Clothing allowance also paid.
BSA	$30 per week
CET	None
Chicago Commons	$30 per week
Connelley	$35 per week plus incentives: $50 for each month of perfect attendance and quarterly payments of $50 for an "A" average, $25 for a "B" and $10 for a "C"; bus passes for initial two months of program
CREC	Bus passes for duration of program; $3.37 per hour during an interim work experience component (maximum -- 15 hours per week); $30 per week needs-based payment during occupational training
East L.A.	Bus passes for duration of program, lunch money (up to $2.85 per day)
EGOS	None
El Centro	$5 per day and a $5 bonus for perfect attendance per week; bus passes for duration of program
Los Angeles Job Corps	Same as Atlanta Job Corps
Phoenix Job Corps	Same as Atlanta Job Corps
Sacramento Job Corps	Same as Atlanta Job Corps
SER-Corpus Christi	$8 per day plus incentives: $45 for maintaining an "A" average throughout training, $25 for a "B" average; $20 for each reading grade level increase; $20 for passing pre-GED test; $40 for passing GED
SER-Milwaukee	None
Stanly Tech	$30 per week if the student has a dependent child; $1-2 per day for transporation

SOURCE: Program records and staff interviews.

classes, and students visit workplaces. The Connelley Skill Learning Center developed and El Centro Community College plans to develop a mentoring component in which local employers serve as advisors for students on an individualized basis. CREC in Hartford initiated an intern component to give JOBSTART students work experience before their training begins. Other sites, such as Chicago Commons, elicit strong private sector involvement in the design and development of training curricula. Most sites also include a "work maturity" or "world of work" component as part of their training.

D. Additional Factors Affecting Implementation

Besides such factors as the type of agency operating JOBSTART, implementation of the program model is likely to be affected by sites' experience in serving the target group and in offering the JOBSTART components as well as by the place of the JOBSTART program in the overall activities at the sites.

1. Prior Experience Serving the Target Group

In addition to the sites attached to Job Corps Centers, half of the JOBSTART sites have historically had a special focus on serving very disadvantaged youths with multiple barriers to employment. They have specifically targeted their services and structured their programs to address the special needs of this youth population. These sites include the four community-based organizations which are also education centers (Allentown in Buffalo, the Basic Skills Academy in New York City, CREC in Hartford and Milwaukee's SER program), as well as two of the school-based skills centers (East Los Angeles and El Centro in Dallas). (See Table 4.5.) With the exception of East Los Angeles and El Centro, however, these sites lack experience in combining education with skills training to the degree required in JOBSTART.

The other JOBSTART sites -- CET in San Jose, Chicago Commons, the Connelley Skill Learning Center, the EGOS program, SER in Corpus Christi, and Stanly Technical College in North Carolina -- have traditionally offered the JOBSTART mix of services. These sites, however, had developed their programs for, and directed most of their services to, adult learners, although a substantial proportion of their enrollees have usually been under 21.

The inclusion of sites experienced in providing both basic education and vocational skills training for older learners -- many of whom are individuals with higher literacy levels than the JOBSTART target population -- has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it suggests that sites will encounter more start-up problems and may experience some difficulties in making the necessary adaptations. On the other hand, it gives MDRC the opportunity to learn more about how existing training programs can be adapted to serve a younger and more educationally disadvantaged population. This issue has considerable policy relevance in part because many service delivery areas in the JTPA network systematically place youths into classroom training courses developed for adults. In addition, many JTPA agencies are requiring contractors to increase the proportion of youths that they enroll in these programs.

Three issues are of particular concern in the implementation of JOBSTART at sites that have worked with an older population: whether staff

TABLE 4.5

PROGRAM ORIENTATION AND PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH JOBSTART COMPONENTS AT JOBSTART SITES

	Prior Experience With Jobstart Components	
Program Orientation	Experience with Both Skills Training and Education	Limited Experience with Skills Training
Youth Oriented Programs	Atlanta Job Corps East L.A. El Centro Los Angeles Job Corps Phoenix Job Corps Sacramento Job Corps	Allentown BSA CREC SER - Milwaukee
Adult Oriented Programs	CET Chicago Commons Connelley EGOS SER - Corpus Christi Stanly Tech	

will be receptive to the extra demands posed by working with younger learners and poorer readers; whether staff will be able to deal with the youths' situational problems and motivate them sufficiently to stay in the program; and whether youths with lower reading skills will be able to keep up with the course work in programs not geared toward this age range or reading level.

The problems entailed in adapting programs to a younger and less educated population may be less acute at sites where instruction is organized on an open-entry/open-exit basis -- that is, where students can move at their own pace and are not required to complete the coursework within a set period of time. The sequencing of the basic education component before occupational skills training may also make adaptation to the JOBSTART target group easier since educational deficiencies can be addressed in the first component.

Early evidence suggests that the sites operating programs originally developed for older groups primarily attempted to accommodate the younger JOBSTART population by enriching their support services (offering more counseling and day care and, to a lesser extent, financial assistance), and supplementing the regular curriculum with tutorials and other educational assistance, rather than by altering curricula or course structure. In part, this response was determined by the limitations on financial resources and time: even had they wanted to change their program more fundamentally, staff lacked the resources.

In part, however, modifications at the sites also reflected the training philosophy that held that if the workplace did not distinguish between youths and adults, neither should training programs. At some sites, staffs felt strongly that youths should be held to the same standards as adults. For example, at Chicago Commons -- a community-based organization that offers intensive training and has a strong reputation in the employer community -- staff did not want to make the program less demanding and argued that employers might perceive the changed classes as "baby" courses for youths. Instead, staff believed that extra support and additional individual assistance would serve to fill the learning and behavioral gaps.

A later report will explore the implementation of JOBSTART at sites with limited experience in serving highly disadvantaged youths. The following questions raise important implementation issues:

- Is the training curriculum and program structure appropriate for a less mature population reading below the eighth grade level?
- Should there be special treatment for youths, or should they be held to the same standards of behavior and achievement as adults?
- Is supplemental assistance necessary to help poor readers perform adequately in the skills training courses? What forms of assistance appear to work best? How can they be incorporated into the program?
- Can extra support services be built into the system? Are they effective in helping to increase program retention?
- Does retention appear to be a greater problem in these sites than in ones that traditionally target youths or specialize in dealing with very disadvantaged youths?
- Does the addition of a substantial proportion of youths into adult programs create a disruptive influence on other students? How does it affect the allocation of resources within the site?

2. Prior Experience with the JOBSTART Components

The JOBSTART sites differ in their prior experience in providing the combination of services mandated in the JOBSTART model. As indicated earlier, four of the community-based organizations (Allentown, the Basic Skills Academy, CREC in Hartford, and Milwaukee SER) are essentially education providers, and generally do not offer on-site skills training for JOBSTART enrollees. Although all of these sites had placed some of their prior education enrollees in skills training classes with local vendors, the number was small and the process did not entail the same kind of intensive oversight and follow-up that the JOBSTART program requires. To implement JOBSTART as intended, these sites have had to take on new responsibilities: to develop new arrangements with their local training providers to broker skills training for their JOBSTART enrollees; to find ways to integrate their education components more fully with skills training; and to establish new procedures for monitoring the progress of students through training and placement into jobs.

The other JOBSTART sites are all experienced in providing both education and skills training, although many are operating the educational component of JOBSTART with a recently purchased computerized system.

3. Scale and Scope of the JOBSTART Demonstration

Another issue likely to affect JOBSTART implementation is the extent to which the program is the major activity at the site. At Corpus Christi SER and the non-residential components of the Job Corps Centers, JOBSTART is the only program offered. All of the other sites are running a variety of programs and services in addition to JOBSTART. JOBSTART enrollees represent only about one-quarter or one-fifth of the planned annual enrollment at most sites; at a few, the planned ratio is as low as one-tenth or one-twentieth of all enrollees. (See Table 4.1.) Where it is part of a broad array of programs offered, JOBSTART -- and its participants -- may receive less attention from administrators and teachers, who have competing demands on their time. However, if JOBSTART is considered a special project at a site, it could nevertheless receive attention, especially if staff are assigned exclusively to it and relieved of other duties.

E. Start-up Issues

Because they lacked extensive experience with the target population or with the mix of JOBSTART services, many of the JOBSTART sites faced substantial challenges as the demonstration got underway. The most extensive modifications were required at the sites that had not previously offered skills training on-site, and those that had both served an older population than the JOBSTART target group and operated fixed cycle, concurrent programs. The type and extent of changes were limited by financial and timing constraints.

1. Program and Staffing Modifications

The principal modifications made for the JOBSTART demonstration are described below:

Staffing. The sites all hired new staff or designated current staff to serve as coordinators for the JOBSTART program. These staff members are generally responsible for making sure that all the components of the demonstration are offered and form a well-integrated program, for tracking the progress of individual students and for advocating for the program when necessary. Most sites also created a position to oversee the collection and reporting of data required for the research evaluation. In addition, some sites hired new staff to serve as recruiters, counselors and part-time instructors.

Recruitment. All the JOBSTART operators developed plans to expand and intensify their recruitment efforts in order to meet the enrollment goals. In some cases (Milwaukee SER, El Centro, Stanly Technical College and EGOS), sites were required to move beyond their prior reliance on referrals from other agencies or word-of-mouth to fill their classes. Most sites need additional staff members to carry out the plans. Three JOBSTART operators negotiated new arrangements with the local JTPA agency about responsibility for recruitment. In Pittsburgh and Corpus Christi, for example, JTPA staff -- recognizing the difficulties of recruiting dropout youths -- played a more active role in recruiting for JOBSTART than for other programs. In Milwaukee, in contrast, where outreach and intake were centralized and operated by a nonprofit corporation, the JOBSTART operator took on new responsibility in recruiting. (Recruitment procedures and early patterns of enrollment are discussed in Chapter 6 of this report.)

Support Services. JOBSTART sites both intensified and expanded the service delivery of support services by hiring new staff or reassigning current staff to take on counseling responsibilities. Some also planned to develop more on-site capacity to deal with a broad array of social problems, rather than simply to refer youths to social service agencies. Others worked to expand their referral network and follow-up procedures, and played a more active role in coordinating service delivery with other agencies. Two (Connelley Skill Learning Center and Corpus Christi SER) developed financial incentive systems to reward students for attendance or performance; another (El Centro in Dallas) won approval from the local JTPA agency to make needs-based payments available to students for the first time.

Education. Although the JOBSTART sites had systems for offering basic education in place before they joined the JOBSTART demonstration, most augmented their educational components. CREC in Hartford, Corpus Christi SER, Stanly Technical College, Milwaukee SER, EGOS in Denver and Connelley Skill Learning Center were all using computer-assisted instruction systems which had been installed shortly before the demonstration began. Other sites had used these systems for some time. El Centro Community College opened an additional learning center utilizing a multi-media, competency-based curriculum. JOBSTART funding was sufficient to allow the East Los Angeles Skills Center to develop a learning center that will serve as a model for other Los Angeles Adult Occupational Skills Training Centers. Chicago Commons hired additional educational staff and instituted a two-hour per day compensatory education class for JOBSTART enrollees. CET in San Jose hired a GED and basic skills tutor to work directly with JOBSTART youths to raise their academic competency levels.

Other sites organized staff or other students to provide tutoring on an as-needed basis. A number of sites also lengthened the training time in their education component to meet the 200-hour minimum imposed in the JOBSTART model.

Training. The most extensive change at the JOBSTART sites was the brokering and integration of skills training in programs that did not offer this component on-site. In other sites, the training curricula already in place met the JOBSTART specifications, although some courses were not appropriate for JOBSTART enrollees because they required less than 500 hours of instruction. Only one site (Stanly Technical College) attempted to develop a new training course specifically for JOBSTART.

2. The Start-up Process

In order to minimize start-up effects in JOBSTART, MDRC allowed an extended planning and development phase. Nevertheless, sites continued to make minor changes in program structure and service delivery in response to unforeseen events during the early months of the demonstration.

Early implementation at some sites was further complicated by developments within the operating agency. Three of the 12 sites not attached to Job Corp Centers -- CREC in Hartford, the Basic Skills Academy in New York City and Milwaukee SER, all community-based organizations -- relocated their training centers shortly before or shortly after the start of JOBSTART random assignment. In addition, a few of the community-based organizations were experiencing severe financial difficulties during the early months of JOBSTART implementation. Substantial cuts in funding at CET in San Jose, for example, led to major staff layoffs and frequent reassignment of the remaining staff, resulting in substantial turnover in the personnel responsible for JOBSTART. During its JOBSTART pilot phase, the Basic Skills Academy severed its connection with the parent organization in which it had been housed for six years, altered its funding base, and relocated to another section of New York City. These developments extended the start-up phase at these sites, thus shortening the period during which the fully developed JOBSTART model could be observed.

CHAPTER 5

JTPA POLICIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF JOBSTART

One of the key questions raised about the employment and training system implemented under the Job Training Partnership Act is its ability to serve the needs of the more disadvantaged members of the eligible population. Concern has focused on whether the high-placement, low-cost emphasis of the performance-based system encourages training vendors to "cream" -- that is, to work with the most employable applicants, who are most likely to obtain jobs on their own. As a training program operated with JTPA funds and targeted to a group which is young and widely recognized as very hard-to-employ, JOBSTART can serve as a test of the ways in which JTPA policies and practices hinder or facilitate service delivery both to youths in general, and to more disadvantaged youths, in particular. Thus, the JOBSTART demonstration provides a rare opportunity to understand the workings of the JTPA system through the prism of a single program, taking account of the operators' point of view as well as the perspective of local JTPA officials.

Building on the more general discussion of JOBSTART and the JTPA system in Chapter 2, this chapter focuses on how local JTPA agencies have responded to JOBSTART. It begins with a discussion of youth policies in the SDAs where JOBSTART sites are located. It goes on to examine how flexible JTPA officials have been in adjusting their funding policies, performance standards and contracting procedures to facilitate JOBSTART's implementation. Finally, the chapter discusses the effect these measures are likely to have on JOBSTART operations.

A. Youth Policy in the JOBSTART SDAs

MDRC's interviews with JOBSTART operators and JTPA staffs in the SDAs reveal many of the trends reported in early implementation reports on JTPA discussed in Chapter 2: problems in meeting the required 40 percent expenditure level and a pattern of mainstreaming youths into adult courses rather than targeting resources to programs oriented to youths. In addition, the interviews suggest that practices common in these SDAs for translating JTPA performance standards into funding contracts may constrain service delivery to the youth population in these areas.

The required expenditure levels of Title IIA funds for youths in program year 1985 varied considerably across the SDAs in the JOBSTART demonstration, ranging from a low of 31 percent in a rural North Carolina SDA to a high of 46 percent in Dallas, Texas. These variations reflect state-approved adjustments to the 40 percent rate stipulated in the law, based on characteristics of the local JTPA-eligible population. Only four of the SDAs were allowed to spend less than 40 percent of their Title IIA allocation on youths. (See Table 5.1 for a breakdown.) One third did not meet the required expenditure standard in program year 1985; most had experienced difficulty in meeting the standard in prior years. In addition, in only three of the SDAs in the JOBSTART sample did the proportion of the Title IIA allocation spent on youths exceed the proportion of youths in the total enrollment.

Most of the SDAs funded some programs or contractors to serve youths specifically, but not at a level sufficient to meet the youth expenditure requirement. Frequently, these were relatively small-scale versions of

TABLE 5.1

SDA YOUTH EXPENDITURE AND ENROLLMENT LEVELS IN PROGRAM YEAR 1985, BY JOBSTART SITE

Site	Name of SDA	Required Youth Expenditure Level[a] (%)	Actual Youth Expenditure Level (%)	Percentage of Total Enrollment Who Were Youth
Allentown[b]	Buffalo/Cheektowaga/ Tonawanda Consortium	38	39	40
BSA	New York City	36	42	37
CET	Santa Clara County	44	52	52
Chicago Commons	City of Chicago	43	42	57
Connelley	City of Pittsburgh	30	34	45
CREC	Hartford	42	39	43
East L.A.	City of Los Angeles	40	39	44
EGOS	City and County of Denver	40	45	38
El Centro	City of Dallas	46	53	54
SER - Corpus Christi	City of Corpus Christi/ Nueces County	44	51	44
SER - Milwaukee	Milwaukee County	43	39	42
Stanly Tech	Centraline	31	48	49

Source: Staff Interviews.

Notes: [a] The JTPA statute requires SDAs to spend a minimum of 40% of their Title IIA allocation on youth. The standard may be adjusted depending upon the ratio of youth to adults in the local JTPA-eligible population. Numbers expressed as percent of Title IIA allocation for the period from July 1, 1985 through June 30, 1986.

[b] These are combined data for program years 1984 and 1985.

youth programs defined as exemplary in the JTPA legislation; on-the-job training; direct placement services; remedial education; or programs for a very specialized segment of the youth population, such as ex-offenders or the mentally retarded. The SDAs planned to meet the rest of the required expenditures by combining youths into courses with adults. Significantly, none of the SDAs reported funding separate classroom skills training programs for youths, but looked to their contractors to serve them in programs that also served adults. Thus, under pressure to increase their youth expenditures, SDAs augmented somewhat their funding of projects for youths only, but the primary strategy was to require contractors to make sure that from 40 to 50 percent of their enrollees were youths.

Although most aspects of performance in JTPA -- such as the entered employment rates, positive termination rates, competency attainments and placement wages -- were closely tied to financial incentives, the youth enrollment targets generally were not. Thus, although contractors were paid for reaching a total enrollment goal, they were not paid for reaching a required level of youth enrollment.

Other policies common in the JOBSTART SDAs also appeared to discourage serving youths. For example, although the federal performance standards clearly differentiate between expected outcomes for adults and youths, as explained in Chapter 2, SDA contracting policies do not always reflect that difference. In skills training courses, in particular, even when contractors were required to serve both youths and adults, performance-based contracts made no distinction in outcomes or payment between the two groups of enrollees. A single overall placement goal was frequently set for the programs.[1]

In addition, contracts for skills training courses rarely specified positive termination rates for youths, thus making job placement the sole criterion of success. Contractors providing education were also required to meet placement goals. Further, as discussed in Chapter 2, the placement and positive termination goals specified in JTPA contracts were almost always higher than the standards required for the SDA, putting even greater pressure on operators serving any sizable proportion of youths. As a result, many contractors were reluctant to enroll a large proportion of youths, and contested the SDA's attempts to increase their youth enrollments.

In general, JTPA staff in the JOBSTART SDAs said that they varied the performance standards on placement or positive termination by the type of program activity, rather than by the type of population served. Thus, SDAs would require a standard placement rate for all on-the-job training programs, another for classroom training, another for direct placement activities, and another for education programs. For programs targeted to particularly difficult-to-serve populations, such as mentally retarded individuals or ex-offender youths, some variation might be allowed on the training cost, length of retention required for a placement, number of hours of work, or average wage. However, variation was rare in placement or positive termination rates.

B. JOBSTART and the Local JTPA System

The previous section indicates that a number of the distinctions made between youth and adult services in the JTPA legislation are not necessarily being carried out at the local level. This raises a number of issues pertinent to the implementation of JOBSTART, among them: whether the funding and contracting policies in the SDAs would provide incentives -- or alternatively, create disincentives -- for program operators to run an intensive training program for a hard-to-serve group, and whether these policies would serve to constrain or facilitate JOBSTART service delivery once the demonstration was underway. A related question is whether SDAs would be willing to adjust their policies to accommodate the special needs of the JOBSTART population.

As discussed in Chapter 3, state and local JTPA agencies were willing to provide funds to contractors -- or to allow funds to be used -- for JOBSTART operations. In assessing the responsiveness of the JTPA system, however, it is necessary to consider factors other than the availability of funding. These include restrictions on the use of funds, contracting policies, the availability of support services and the way in which performance standards are tied to financial rewards or penalties. The interaction between these factors is critical to understanding the responsiveness of the system to JOBSTART operations.

1. Funding Sources and Restrictions on Their Use

As discussed earlier, the JTPA system -- in providing the bulk of JOBSTART operating funds (see Table 3.2) -- primarily used 78 percent money allocated to the SDAs, although four SDAs used locally-controlled funds from governors' 8 percent set-asides for educational linkages. All but one site is also receiving funds from the state-controlled portion of the 8 percent set-aside.

The 8 percent education set-aside proved a particularly valuable source of funding because it is not necessarily subject to the same 70/30 training/support services and administrative cost restrictions as 78 percent funds, or the same performance standards. Thus, sites used the 8 percent set-asides to pay for salaries, support services and additional equipment, expenditures that -- if paid for with 78 percent funds -- would have reportedly raised JOBSTART operators' cost per positive termination and entered employment outcomes to unacceptably high levels. The 8 percent money was not always flexible enough, however. State policy in one JOBSTART location prohibited its use for expenditures that were contrary to normal PIC policy and required that no more than 10 percent of the funds be used to pay administrative costs.

In general, JOBSTART operators reported that the funds available from local SDAs were inadequate to meet the costs of enriching or expanding program components or hiring additional JOBSTART staff, and that additional sources of funding were needed to implement the program model as intended. A few sites, notably Corpus Christi SER and the East Los Angeles Skill Center, were relatively well-funded from local JTPA sources, reflecting a recognition on the part of these local JTPA staffs that programs for the JOBSTART target group were necessarily more intensive and expensive than others.

Sites also looked to funding sources outside the JTPA system, such as state education grants or private sector contributions. School-based sites had the advantage of being able to pay for at least some of the JOBSTART costs (such as staff and equipment) with operating funds derived from the school system. Overall, these sites were in a better position to provide the 100 percent match required for 8 percent funding.

Additional resources also had to be found to finance activities or expenditures that were not allowable in the JTPA system. Support services were a particular problem for many sites. Incentive payments cannot be financed with JTPA funds, and a number of the SDAs which did not normally provide needs-based payments were unwilling to authorize them for JOBSTART enrollees.

These multiple funding sources created problems for the site operators. The time spent seeking funding and waiting for the money to be allocated delayed the start-up of the demonstration in many locations. In addition, the necessity of juggling several different accounting systems and meeting different sets of performance standards greatly complicated the administrative tasks of JOBSTART operators.

2. Setting Performance Levels for JOBSTART

As discussed in Chapter 2, incentives built into the JTPA performance standards system push contractors to exceed their performance goals and place a high proportion of their enrollees in jobs while keeping training costs low. To the extent that such standards can be reached more readily by working with easier-to-employ groups, they present disincentives for serving more disadvantaged individuals, such as those targeted in the JOBSTART demonstration.[2] Recognizing this, the U.S. Department of Labor has issued a technical assistance guide recommending that SDAs be flexible in setting peformance goals for programs that deal with difficult groups. The guide identifies the following practices that can discourage program operators from serving such groups as the JOBSTART enrollees:[3]

- Setting vendor goals higher than the level of expected performance established for the SDA may create a disincentive for serving those most in need.
- Setting all vendor goals at the same level is not fair to

those that target services to special, hard-to-serve groups. For this reason, passing on the SDA's standard uniformly to all service providers is not recommended.

- Vendors serving particularly disadvantaged groups legitimately deserve more lenient contract goals.

Options are available to JTPA agencies seeking to encourage contractors to serve the harder-to-employ. They can allow higher cost standards, letting vendors provide longer, more intensive, and thus more expensive services. They can lower the minimum placement goal, recognizing that such individuals face greater barriers to employment. In youth programs, they can put more emphasis on positive terminations and less on placements, permitting contractors to help enrollees make a transition from one type of training program into another, as required in JOBSTART.

The presumption that young dropouts may have lower placement outcomes than other groups is based on evidence that very disadvantaged individuals in other programs have lower placement rates than those with more education, less welfare dependency or more job experience.[4] This does not mean, however, that such programs are ineffective with these groups. On the contrary, research evidence suggests that employment programs have their greatest impacts on groups that are more disadvantaged because such persons are less likely to get jobs on their own without program assistance. Thus, a program that produces high placement rates by working with a more advantaged population, such as high school graduates, may be less effective than a program that produces lower overall placements but works with a harder-to-employ group.

A few SDAs did adjust the performance goals in the contracts they wrote for JOBSTART operators in recognition that they were working with a harder-to-serve population. In Los Angeles, both the entered employment and the positive termination rates set in the East Los Angeles Skill Center's JOBSTART contract were substantially lower than the SDA standards as a whole. (See Table 5.2.) Hartford eliminated a placement standard in order to facilitate the transition of remedial education "graduates" into skills training. Other SDAs, such as Chicago, adjusted their cost standards for the JOBSTART program, funding a more expensive program than was usually the case.

In some SDAs, JOBSTART operators were asked to meet placement or positive termination standards typical of what the SDA expected of any contractor that provided occupational training or education services. Indeed, in many cases, the JTPA contractors called for JOBSTART operators to do better than the SDA standard. (See Table 5.2.) SDA staff who did not make adjustments for JOBSTART's more difficult population gave several reasons for their reluctance. Some believed that by building additional supports into the JOBSTART model and/or lengthening the duration of training, the quality of service was improved; therefore, they argued, contractors could and should meet the higher placement goals.

Many SDA staff also believed that imposing high standards was necessary to ensure quality performance; they feared that lowering expectations would result in a poorer product. Accepting a placement standard as an appropriate measure of success, they felt that if an occupational training contractor failed to place, for example, 75 percent of its training graduates, it was simply not doing a good job.

Still another concern was that if JTPA staff offered special conditions to JOBSTART operators, they would have to individualize more of their

TABLE 5.2

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IN LOCAL JTPA CONTRACTS, BY JOBSTART SITE

Site	Scope of Site Contract	Type of Contract	Entered Employment Standard		Positive Termination Standard		Cost Per Positive Termination	
			Site Contract	SDA[a]	Site Contract	SDA[a]	Site Contract	SDA[a]
Allentown[c]	Multiple programs; multiple youth service groups	Cost Reimbursement	53%	30%	85%	72%	$2800	$3825
BSA pilot[b]	JOBSTART specific	Performance-Based	none	38%	70%	73%	$1000[e]	$4365
CET[b]	JOBSTART model; multiple service groups	Performance-Based	64%[d]	Adult 51% Youth 30%	77%	78%	$3472	$4572
Chicago Commons[c]	JOBSTART model; multiple service groups	Performance-Based	70%	Adult 53% Youth 38%	85%	70%	$4200-$6891	$3463
Connelley[b]	JOBSTART specific	Cost Reimbursement	none	34%	none	63%	none	$5453
CREC[c]	JOBSTART specific	Performance-Based	none	55%	73%-80%	75%	$1944[e]	$2755
East L.A.[c]	JOBSTART model; multiple youth service groups	Performance-Based	23%	43%	50%	69%	$3571	$4689
EGOS[b]	JOBSTART specific	Cost Reimbursement	60%	41%-67%	75%	70%-94%	none	$1964-$3612

(continued)

TABLE 5.2 (continued)

Site	Scope of Site Contract	Type of Contract	Entered Employment Standard		Positive Termination Standard		Cost Per Positive Termination	
			Site Contract	SDA[a]	Site Contract	SDA[a]	Site Contract	SDA[a]
El Centro[b]	Multiple programs; multiple service groups	Cost Reimbursement	53%	55%	67%	73%	$2491	$3129
SER - Corpus Christi[b]	JOBSTART model; multiple service groups	Performance-Based	none[f]	34%	75%	70%	$3687	$4830
SER - Milwaukee[c]	Multiple programs; multiple service groups	Cost Reimbursement	50%	38%-49%	74%	61%-71%	$3437	$4100-$4900
Stanly Tech[b]	Multiple programs; multiple service programs	Cost Reimbusement	43%	adult 51% youth 18%	83%	83%	none	$4255

SOURCE: Program records; JTPA contracts and staff interviews.

NOTES: [a] The SDA standards refer to the performance standards set by the state for the individual SDA. All states but Colorado use the U.S. Department of Labor regression model to adjust the national standard.

[b] The standards are for program year 1985, when the JOBSTART demonstration began.

[c] The standards are for program year 1986, when the bulk of the JOBSTART program would be run.

[d] The SDA suggested a 87% placement rate for adults, and 80% for youth, but CET preferred an overall rate of 84%.

[e] Represents per enrollee cost in a basic education program. Additional funding was provided through non-JTPA contracts.

[f] Placement is the responsibility of the Texas Employment Commission.

contracts. SDA officials did not want to open the door to a flood of special requests.

Some SDA staff felt that their contracting policies with the JOBSTART operator already reflected the fact that they served a difficult population. For example, Milwaukee divided contractors into three categories according to the difficulty of the population that they usually served; when grants were awarded, contractors competed within their category, rather than on a city-wide basis. As explained in the next section, some SDAs were willing to vary the type of contract, permitting cost-reimbursement contracts rather than performance-based ones.

3. Contracting Policies

Pressures created by JTPA cost restrictions and performance standards could be eased or exacerbated by the contracting policies in each SDA. Two issues were particularly critical: whether the JOBSTART contract was written on a performance or a cost-reimbursement basis and whether it was written specifically for JOBSTART or included other service programs and target populations at the sites.

In a performance-based contract, training vendors are paid a fixed unit cost for training a specified number of individuals. Payments are only made, however, for individuals who reach specified benchmarks, the most important of which are placement in a training-related job and positive termination.[5] Performance-based contracts provide funding flexibility for both SDAs and contractors since they allow all program costs, including support service and administrative costs, to be billed under the 70 percent "training" category. In contrast, cost-reimbursement contracts cover actual costs up to a maximum, and payments are not tied directly to specific outcomes. Under cost-reimbursement contracts, support services and administrative costs are counted in the 30 percent category.

From the contractors' point of view, however, performance-based contracts present a potential problem: vendors can lose money if they fail to meet the performance standards specified in the contract. In addition, since little money is provided at the start of the program -- and a varying proportion is withheld until a completion, placement or positive termination is documented -- contractors may be under pressure to move trainees quickly through the program and into jobs. Smaller organizations are particularly likely to experience a cash flow problem and may require other sources of income to cover costs in the early months of training.

Performance-based contracts are reported to pose particular hardships for community-based organizations, which usually have fewer capital reserves to draw on than other types of organizations, and less access to other operating funds. Public schools, which have an assured income based on average attendance rates, are in a better position to cover expenses if contract funds are delayed. However, they are less likely to be tolerant of the performance standards that JTPA imposes on its training vendors. Although the community-based organizations in the JOBSTART demonstration had adjusted to the special conditions of performance-based contracting, school-based programs expressed serious reservations about them, and indicated that they would refuse funds rather than operate certain programs under performance-based contracts.

Many of the SDAs in the JOBSTART demonstration were flexible in their choice of performance-based or cost-reimbursement contracts, using different approaches with different types of service providers or for different types of programs. Overall, half of the JOBSTART vendors are operating their programs under performance-based contracts, while half are operating on a cost-reimbursement basis. (See Table 5.2.) In two cases (Denver and Pittsburgh), SDAs made a special exception for the JOBSTART provider, writing a cost-reimbursement contract for the demonstration program, when all other SDA contracts are performance-based. In other sites where JOBSTART is operated under a cost-reimbursement contract, the SDAs are following their standard policy. Thus, the JTPA agencies in Dallas and Centralina, North Carolina normally write cost-reimbursement contracts for schools; JTPA in Milwaukee does so for all non-occupational training; and Buffalo funds its two youth service agencies in this manner.

In JOBSTART, the type of agency operating the program appears to affect the type of contract: four out of the six cost-reimbursement contracts are with school-based sites; only one school (East Los Angeles) has a performance-based contract. In contrast, five out of the seven community-based organizations are operating with performance-based contracts.

Equally important is the scope of the contract: is it written specifically for JOBSTART, or is JOBSTART offered as one of many program activities or to one target group among several? Where JOBSTART is part of a larger contract for multiple activities or service groups, operators may have more leeway to offer JOBSTART and meet JTPA standards. It is possible, for example, that higher JOBSTART costs can be absorbed by a site if it operates less expensive or less intensive programs for its other enrollees; the lower outcomes of JOBSTART enrollees (if these occur) might also be acceptable if the site's other programs or enrollees achieve higher placement or positive termination rates than established by the standards. A number of demonstration sites have this flexibility. One-third have contracts written exclusively for JOBSTART, but another one-third funded to run JOBSTART are not required to enroll only JOBSTART-eligibles. The remaining one-third are funded to operate a variety of program activities in addition to JOBSTART, and can enroll a different population as well. (Table 5.2 shows the scope of the site contracts.)

4. Additional Factors Affecting JOBSTART Implementation

From an operator's point of view, the definition of a positive termination or an entered employment is as important as the number or proportion of such terminations required. As with many other aspects of the highly decentralized JTPA system, these definitions vary considerably from location to location. What this means, in practice, is that some JOBSTART sites will have a more difficult time than others in complying with the terms of their contract and meeting the required performance standards.

For example, JTPA contracts in different locations define placement quite differently. The most common practice is to require retention on the job for 30 days, but as little as one week may be accepted. Some SDAs also stipulate that placements must be in full-time jobs at a specified minimum wage level, that is, placement into any job does not necessarily count either for payment purposes or for meeting the performance goals. JOBSTART operators working under contracts that require higher starting wages or longer-term placements could find themselves at a disadvantage in trying to meet their goals for JOBSTART youths.

Equally important is the way the local PIC defines the employment competency attainments that can count as positive terminations for youths.

(In the JTPA system, PICs are given the authorization to develop a competency system that reflects the standards of employers in the local labor market.) As shown in Table 5.3, the educational standards of the competency system developed by local PICS vary considerably across the JOBSTART sites. At one extreme, the Hartford SDA is willing to credit CREC, the JOBSTART site, with a positive termination for any individual who achieves a gain of one grade in reading and is either able to meet the entry level requirement of a training provider or reads at least at the sixth grade level.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the education competencies developed by the New York City PIC require enrollees to advance at least two grades in either reading or math and one grade in the other subject, and to reach at least a seventh-grade reading level and a sixth-grade math level. In Buffalo, the PIC requires a 20 percent improvement over entry performance, and either a minimum reading level of the ninth grade or a score higher than a passing grade on the GED or American College Test. The Corpus Christi SDA calls for GED attainment or at least a two-year increase in reading scores. Los Angeles requires a GED or an increase of one level in reading, writing, and math on the standardized Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Enrollees in the Milwaukee SER site must reach a minimum of a 7.5 reading level at completion of the site's pre-GED preparation course (minimum entry-level reading score of the fifth grade) and attain a GED or a tenth-grade reading level in the GED preparation course (minimum entry-level reading score of 7.5).

A potential problem is that the higher the standard, the longer poorer

TABLE 5.3

EDUCATION COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR POSITIVE TERMINATIONS, BY JOBSTART SITES[a]

Site	Education Competency
Allentown	gain of 20% above entry level performance and score of 10 points above passing grade on the GED test or score of 215 on the American College Test or 9th grade reading level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
BSA	gain of two grade levels in reading or math and one level in other subject and minimum 7th grade reading level, minimum 6th grade math level or GED attainment
CREC	gain of one grade level in reading on the TABE and meeting entry level required for skills training or minimum 6th grade reading level
East L.A.	gain of one level in reading and math and writing on the TABE or GED attainment
SER-Corpus Christi	gain of two grade levels in reading or GED attainment
SER Milwaukee	minimum reading level of 7.5 grades in pre-GED group or minimum 10th grade reading level in GED prep or GED attainment

SOURCE: JTPA contracts, program records, and staff interviews.

NOTES: [a]At the sites not included in this table, contracts either did not specify positive termination standards or did not base payment directly on them.

readers will have to be in training to meet them and to qualify as a positive termination. This entails higher costs. As in the case of standards that require contractors to meet high rates of placement or positive termination, the requirements about competency levels can put programs, such as JOBSTART, which serve a population with poor reading skills at a disadvantage.

Also critical to the facility with which disadvantaged youths can be served is the relative importance attached to the attainment of employment competencies or other positive terminations. At about half of the JOBSTART sites, SDAs treated competencies as a significant outcome, either by tying payment directly to them, or by mandating a goal for contractors to meet. However, other SDAs made such competencies relatively insignificant by not stressing them in performance reviews or making them a condition of payment. Although this may be appropriate for most skills training courses, it is more questionable for a program such as JOBSTART which emphasizes basic education as well as skills training.

The issue of whether employment competencies or placements are given more weight is particularly important for sites that are operating JOBSTART as a sequential model and in which other vendors provide the skills training after a basic education level has been achieved. For these sites (Allentown, the Basic Skills Academy, CREC in Hartford, and Milwaukee SER), a strong emphasis on placement, or entered employment, seems misplaced, and could make it very difficult for education providers to implement JOBSTART as intended and still meet their performance goals. Since Milwaukee SER and Allentown both operate JOBSTART together with other programs and service groups, they could conceivably achieve the placement criteria with non-JOBSTART enrollees, and move the JOBSTART enrollees into skills training. The Hartford SDA addressed the issue by eliminating the entered employment goal for CREC and by providing additional incentives for the site to move enrollees into skills training.

Additional operational issues are raised by the federal Department of Labor's stipulation that a transition from one Title II training program into another cannot count as a positive termination for federal reporting purposes. A number of SDAs in the JOBSTART sample thus require that enrollees in basic education programs funded by JTPA must be placed with non-JTPA vendors in order to be recognized as positive terminations. This may make it more difficult for sites that are providing basic education to JOBSTART enrollees to move them into occupational skills training because it limits the supply of potential training vendors.

CREC in Hartford and the Basic Skills Academy in New York City present an interesting contrast in how the performance standards and payment schedules in JTPA contracts can affect the implementation of the JOBSTART program design. As discussed in Chapter 3, the City of Hartford had a strong interest in developing a feeder system of educational vendors that could prepare JTPA enrollees for skills training. Concerned that the usual placement standards would work against this, JTPA staff crafted a new system of standards. These standards reward education providers for moving youths into skills training without requiring them to place youths quickly in jobs and encourage local skills providers to enroll graduates of the basic education programs. In addition, Hartford proved very flexible in negotiating payment schedules to accommodate vendors, without losing sight of the ultimate goal of job entry. The contract negotiated for JOBSTART left CREC staff feeling confident that they could operate JOBSTART and not be penalized for working with a harder-to-employ group, while JTPA officials believed they had provided for accountability in the program. The contract also served as a model for other service providers in Hartford. Both JTPA and CREC staffs believed that the new standards would facilitate service delivery in the area.

In contrast, basic education competencies approved by the New York City PIC made it difficult during a pilot phase of JOBSTART in the winter of 1985-1986, for the Basic Skills Academy to operate the JOBSTART educational component and then move enrollees into skills training. The educational gains -- described above -- that enrollees were required to make during a very limited training period were so rigorous that it was recognized at the outset that few were likely to do so.[6]

The difficulties in implementing JOBSTART in New York City were compounded by the rule that entry into JTPA Title II training did not count as a positive termination; this regulation severely curtailed the pool of available training vendors. In order to avoid financial loss, the Basic Skills Academy was forced to move JOBSTART enrollees into jobs rather than into skills training, as called for in JOBSTART. The problems faced by the BSA in the execution of this contract led staff to seek non-JTPA funding for JOBSTART during the full demonstration period.

C. Adaptations to Facilitate Implementation of JOBSTART

Roughly half the SDAs in the JOBSTART sample made some change in their usual operating procedures in order to facilitate the implementation of a demonstration program targeting a very-hard-to-employ group.

- Two SDAs wrote cost-reimbursement contracts for JOBSTART, when normally the SDA policy was to write only performance-based contracts (Denver, Pittsburgh).

- Three other SDAs lowered their performance standards for placement and/or positive termination for JOBSTART because operators were working with a harder-to-serve target population (Los Angeles, Hartford, Dallas).

- Another wrote new performance standards specifically for JOBSTART, recognizing the importance in the sequential JOBSTART model of moving students from remedial education into skills training, rather than placing them quickly into a job (Hartford).

- Two SDAs earmarked considerably more money for support services in JOBSTART, and others made needs-based payments or incentives available for JOBSTART enrollees, contrary to normal policy. Each recognized that this harder-to-serve group would require more support services than other JTPA enrollees (Los Angeles, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Pittsburgh).

The SDAs that made special accommodations for JOBSTART are ones in which local policy initiatives sought to provide more or better services to young high school dropouts, or in which there was interest at the local level in building a strong remediation component into the JTPA system. They appear to be the exception, rather than the rule, in the current JTPA environment.

The fact that the SDAs were able to adjust performance standards and contracting policies suggests that the JTPA system provides opportunities to respond to special needs groups -- if SDAs are willing to use these opportunities, and if they are encouraged to do so by federal and state policy on performance standards and the use of the 6 percent and 8 percent set-asides. However, responding to the opportunities to serve the harder-to-employ will require considerable foresight, perseverance and ingenuity on the part of agency staff. Such approaches can mitigate, although not necessarily overcome, the problems posed by funding and cost constraints.

CHAPTER 6

RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

Recruitment was one of the first tasks facing program operators as they began to implement JOBSTART. Although most of the organizations operating JOBSTART had extensive previous experience in attracting and serving the target population, recruitment was expected to be difficult.[1]

As indicated in Chapter 1, research on youth programs has indicated that dropouts are substantially more difficult to reach and enroll in programs than in-school youths. A study of federally-funded employment and training programs under the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 (YEDPA) found that, despite the generally acknowledged need for services to school dropouts, many programs targeted to this population had difficulty recruiting applicants. When CETA prime sponsors who were charged with implementing YEDPA programs had the option of serving either students or dropouts, they tended to focus on the in-school group, in part because they were less difficult to recruit and retain in services. "As a result," the authors concluded, "the question of how to reach and serve dropout youths effectively was largely unanswered by YEDPA."[2]

MDRC's evaluation of one of the YEDPA programs, the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP), provided a unique opportunity to gather data on the success of CETA prime sponsors in enrolling both in-school and dropout youths in a program offering a guaranteed job in return for school enrollment. The study found a substantially lower rate of program participation for eligible dropouts (29 percent) compared to eligible youths still in school (68 percent).[3]

This difference can be explained by the research findings showing that dropouts were not only more difficult to locate and inform about the program, they were also less likely to participate once informed. Whereas 94 percent of in-school youths who were interviewed were aware of the program, only 75 percent of the out-of-school eligible youths said they had heard of the program's offer. Further, when they were aware of the program, out-of-school youths were less likely to apply for YIEPP than those in school -- 61 percent versus 85 percent, respectively.[4]

Nearly one-fifth of the informed dropouts who did not apply for YIEPP said they did not want to return to school or an alternative education program in their community.[5] This is an important factor to consider in designing recruitment strategies for dropout programs. Although JOBSTART's educational component is different from traditional academic instruction offered in schools, youths may not know this when they first hear about the program.

Recruiting dropouts has become even more difficult in the current employment and training environment, in part because JTPA has eliminated allowance payments made to participants in classroom training. Fewer people without high school diplomas have enrolled in JTPA-funded programs than under CETA;[6] this change cannot be attributed only to temporary problems in establishing referral linkages in the transition to JTPA. Data comparing the characteristics of youths enrolled in classroom training in the 1984 and 1985 JTPA program years show a continuing decline in the proportion of youths who are dropouts and an increase in students.[7] JOBSTART represents an opportunity to reverse this trend, but the literature provides little guidance on effective strategies for recruiting dropouts.

In addition to the general problems in recruiting dropouts, the JOBSTART demonstration raises an additional concern. As discussed earlier, the experimental research design for JOBSTART requires recruitment of twice the number of eligible youths than will be served: half will be assigned to the control group, not eligible for JOBSTART services; and half to the experimental group, which will be enrolled in the program. To reach the goal of enrolling at least 100 eligible youths per JOBSTART site over the course of 12 months, a minimum of 200 eligible youths must be recruited. Given that JOBSTART operators do not tend to have waiting lists, it was anticipated that the programs would have to exceed their previous recruitment levels.[8]

For several reasons, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of recruitment strategies used by the different program operators or to look for lessons about attracting dropouts to relatively long-term services. First, recruitment in JOBSTART is not yet complete. During the period covered in this chapter -- August 1985 through July 1986 -- only two JOBSTART sites (Corpus Christi SER and the Connelley Skill Learning Center in Pittsburgh) finished a cycle of recruitment designed to enroll 100 youths. Four of the programs had not yet started random assignment and therefore are not discussed in this chapter. Of the 12 operating sites, five did not begin random assignment until after March 1986. Thus, for almost half of the sites observed for this study, the amount of time was too short to draw even preliminary conclusions.

Another problem was that many sites recruit and enroll youths as classroom slots open up. These programs expect to recruit youths over an extended period of time. As discussed in earlier chapters, only three sites -- Corpus Christi SER, the Connelley Skill Learning Center in Pittsburgh and Chicago Commons -- operate programs that recruit for classes with fixed beginning and ending dates.

The remainder of this chapter describes recruitment and enrollment procedures in JOBSTART through July 1986. The first section discusses recruitment strategies, the second examines eligibility determination and enrollment procedures, and the third describes the characteristics of youths who entered the JOBSTART research sample. The chapter concludes with a discussion of factors that appear to have influenced the pace of recruitment and enrollment during the early operational stages of the demonstration.

A. Recruitment Strategies

As seen in Table 6.1, a total of 733 youths enrolled in the JOBSTART demonstration through July 1986. Enrollment had risen to 1,227 by December 31, 1986. While the pace of enrollment has been slower than anticipated at most of the sites, the two organizations that have operated JOBSTART for a full year have either met or reasonably approximated the goal of randomly assigning 200 eligible youths. In Corpus Christi, SER enrolled 100 members of the experimental group into classes that began in the fall of 1985. The recruitment drive conducted by the Connelley Skill Learning Center during the summer of 1985 also succeeded in bringing in a large number of youths within a relatively short period of time. However, because recruitment ended shortly after the start of the school year, total enrollment fell short of the needed amount.

TABLE 6.1

NUMBER OF EXPERIMENTALS AND CONTROLS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED, BY JOBSTART SITE (AUGUST 1985 - JULY 1986 SAMPLE)

Site	First Month of Random Assignment	August-October 1985	November 1985-January 1986	February-April 1986	May-July 1986	Total
Allentown	June 1986	-	-	-	11	11
CET	November 1985	-	18	50	29	97
Chicago Commons	March 1986	-	-	16	-	16
Connelley	August 1985	145	-	-	-	145
CREC	April 1986	-	-	15	20	35
East L.A.	May 1986	-	-	-	23	23
EGOS	April 1986	-	-	26	43	69
El Centro	March 1986	-	-	9	43	52
Phoenix Job Corps	June 1986	-	-	-	21	21
SER - Corpus Christi	October 1985	83	117	-	-	200
SER - Milwaukee	April 1986	-	-	4	7	11
Stanly Tech	November 1985	-	35	16	2	53
Total	August 1985	228	170	136	199	733

SOURCE: Tabulations from the JOBSTART Enrollment Forms.

NOTES: Since the Job Corps Centers in Atlanta, Los Angeles and Sacramento and the Basic Skills Academy in New York had not started random assignment as of July 31, 1986, they are not included in this table.

A dash indicates that a site was not scheduled to do random assignment during a given quarter.

Although most of the programs do not expect to complete enrollment in less than a year, it is nonetheless apparent in Table 6.1 that some sites may fall significantly short of the recruitment goal of 200 eligible youths. At one site, a lack of open slots has constrained enrollment. However, for most, slot capacity has not been a major factor in explaining the slow pace of program enrollment. To speed up the process, several sites have redesigned their recruitment efforts occasionally by changing methods but, more frequently, by adding new outreach methods. In addition, staffing and other resources have sometimes increased. In short, the level of effort has intensified.

In programs with "rolling" enrollment -- that is, youths enroll when classroom slots are open -- it has been particularly difficult to gauge the amount of lead time and staff needed to bring in an adequate number of youths. Staffs in these programs have increasingly recognized the level of work needed to maintain a constant flow of applicants, particularly at the beginning of a recruitment drive. The initial step involves substantial effort to build the program's visibility among youths and their communities.

In fashioning their recruitment strategies, JOBSTART program operators faced several challenges. First, operators have had to locate and inform a target population that is widely dispersed: that is, they do not gather each day in a centralized location, such as a school. Second, the recruitment message has to be attractive to young people who are known to be somewhat skeptical about programs, as well as about their own ability to learn in an educational setting. Dropouts are also, as a group, "turned off" from school, and a relatively intensive, long-term course of education combined with training may not appeal to them. Finally, because the target audience for the JOBSTART recruitment message is poor and unemployed, immediate income is often the greatest need.

In the following discussion of recruitment strategies, the two sites with the longest experience are highlighted: Connelley Skill Learning Center in Pittsburgh and Corpus Christi SER. Other sites are described in less detail. The discussion centers on the staff responsible for recruitment, their methods of disseminating information, and the content of the JOBSTART message.

1. Staffing Patterns

The organization operating the JOBSTART program does not always have the responsibility for recruiting youths. Table 6.2 shows that, in one of the 12 programs (the Connelley Skill Learning Center), the SDA took on the primary responsibility for JOBSTART recruitment. At three other sites (CREC in Hartford, the Milwaukee and Corpus Christi SER programs), program operators shared responsibility with the SDA, because that agency -- in recruiting for a broad range of programs funded by JTPA -- informed youths about JOBSTART.

Relatively few staff members were assigned to recruitment tasks. Even when SDAs were involved, constraints on administrative costs have limited outreach resources. Only two of the programs (Allentown in Buffalo and the Phoenix Job Corps Center) have assigned staff members to work exclusively on recruitment. The other program operators with full or partial responsibility either delegated it to JOBSTART staff who also had other administrative or counseling tasks, or hired new staff in temporary positions as

TABLE 6.2

AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE RECRUITMENT, JTPA CERTIFICATION AND ENROLLMENT OF JOBSTART ELIGIBLE YOUTH, BY TYPE OF AGENCY (AUGUST 1985-JULY 1986 SAMPLE)

	Agency	
Site	JOBSTART Program Operator	SDA
Allentown		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification	X	
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	
CET		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification	X	
Testing for Reading Level	X[a]	
Enrollment	X	
Chicago Commons		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification		X
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	
Connelley		
Recruitment		X
JTPA Certification		X
Testing for Reading Level		X
Enrollment	X	X
CREC		
Recruitment	X	X
JTPA Certification		X
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	
East L.A.		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification	X	
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	

(continued)

TABLE 6.2 (continued)

	Agency	
Site	JOBSTART Program Operator	SDA
EGOS		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification	X	
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	
El Centro		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification	X	
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	
Phoenix Job Corps[b]		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification	X	
Testing for Reading Level	X[a]	
Enrollment	X	
SER - Corpus Christi		
Recruitment	X	X
JTPA Certification		X
Testing for Reading Level		X
Enrollment	X	
SER - Milwaukee		
Recruitment	X	X
JTPA Certification		X
Testing for Reading Level		X
Enrollment	X	
Stanly Tech		
Recruitment	X	
JTPA Certification		X
Testing for Reading Level	X	
Enrollment	X	

SOURCE: Interviews with JOBSTART program operators and SDA staffs.

NOTES: [a] At CET and Phoenix Job Corps, enrollees are tested for reading level after random assignment.

[b] Applicants at Phoenix Job Corps must meet federal eligibility standards for Job Corps.

recruiters. The people responsible for recruitment usually had had prior experience in youth outreach or programming.

2. Methods of Recruitment

No matter which organization conducted recruitment, staff members used several methods simultaneously to reach out to youths, their families, and low-income neighborhoods more generally. At most of the sites, these methods included: letters followed by phone calls or visits (or some other sequence of the three); fliers included with welfare or Summer Youth Employment Program checks; fliers and posters distributed in public settings; public service announcements on radio and television stations; advertisements in church bulletins and newspapers (often community papers); and presentations to the staffs of a wide variety of community agencies. Staff involved in recruitment have targeted the youths directly (by letters, phone calls and visits) and indirectly (through publicity targeted to low-income communities).

Information collected at random assignment about how applicants first heard about JOBSTART indicates that the JOBSTART program was most frequently the source of program information, with one-third of the youths learning of JOBSTART through the staff of the program or its fliers and posters. Other sources mentioned less frequently were friends and relatives, print and electronic media, and JTPA staff members. (See Table 6.3.)

Although it is too early to assess outreach efforts as a whole, the experience of the two programs that completed the enrollment cycle, as well as interviews with staffs at other sites, provide early indications of methods that seem most helpful. In general, it was found that recruitment

TABLE 6.3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT FOR THE JOBSTART RESEARCH SAMPLE, BY SITE
(AUGUST 1985 - JULY 1986 SAMPLE)

Sources of Recruitment	Allentown	CET	Chicago Commons	Connelley	CREC	East L.A.	EGOS	El Centro	Phoenix Job Corps	SER-Corpus Christi	SER-Milwaukee	Stanly Tech	Total
Jobstart Program	9.1	82.5	0.0	10.3	57.1	30.4	76.8	15.4	71.4	10.5	27.3	37.7	33.2
Friends/Relatives	36.4	15.5	18.8	26.9	5.7	34.8	10.1	32.7	19.0	33.0	18.2	13.2	23.7
Media	27.3	0.0	50.0	14.5	22.9	17.4	8.7	30.8	9.5	44.0	9.1	3.8	21.7
JTPA	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	10.0	27.3	39.6	15.6
Other CBO	18.2	0.0	25.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	9.6	0.0	1.5	18.2	0.0	2.5
Justice System	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.9	0.7
Other Government Agency	9.1	2.1	6.3	0.7	5.7	17.4	2.9	5.8	0.0	0.5	0.0	3.8	2.6
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Sample Size	11	97	16	145	35	23	69	52	21	200	11	53	733

NOTES: Calculations from the JOBSTART Enrollment Forms.

appeared to be more efficient if it was targeted to the eligible youths directly -- for example, if individuals on a list of dropouts were mailed letters or phoned -- rather than if contact was of a more general nature, as, for example, in talking to groups of youths at street fairs or playgrounds. Even more important than the method used was the ability to follow up on contacts and the level of effort expended. Sites using relatively similar and standard methods had different degrees of success, suggesting that commitment, the intensity of the recruitment campaign, and its timing are often key to success.

The cooperation of other agencies is often needed to identify a large number of dropouts. School systems in Corpus Christi, Pittsburgh, Denver, Chicago, Albemarle and Los Angeles provided important assistance in supplying lists of dropouts. When the timing of JOBSTART classes allowed it, staff targeted dropouts working in JTPA-funded Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP), a large pool of potentially eligible youths. This was the case in Pittsburgh and Chicago. SDAs were able to help programs by supplying computerized lists of dropouts enrolled in SYEP. Social service agencies in some cities also included information about JOBSTART in their mailings of public assistance checks.

Given the amount of cooperation needed to coordinate personal outreach and general publicity, early planning -- well in advance of the expected start-up of random assignment -- appeared to be an essential factor. The Pittsburgh and Corpus Christi JOBSTART programs prepared work plans covering the entire recruitment period and carefully adhered to the projected schedules. Both sites started several months before enrollment efforts needed to begin, and, during this period, at least a few staff members were expected to spend a considerable amount of time carrying out the recruitment plan. For example, SDA staff in Pittsburgh began work on recruitment in May 1985 and expected to conduct random assignment in August. Corpus Christi SER began outreach efforts in July 1985 for classes that began in October and November. Once recruitment began, staffs in Corpus Christi and Pittsburgh worked full-time and often evenings and weekends if these were the best times to contact youths. Their level of commitment to recruitment tasks may have been heightened by an understanding that an intensive effort, sustained over several months, was necessary to bring in the targeted number of youths before classes started.

3. Creating a JOBSTART Outreach Message

The recruitment message varied across sites. Overall, it had not only to describe the program accurately, but also appeal to dropouts. The message delivered depended on what services were offered at the sites.

Programs known as occupational skills providers tended to emphasize that training could lead to a good job, since staff believed that the value of education in obtaining jobs was not all that clear to youths. On the other hand, education providers and multi-service vendors gave educational services as much emphasis as vocational training and the prospect of a job. Some sites that provided needs-based payments and financial or non-monetary rewards also publicized these.

B. Eligibility Determination and Enrollment

The research required that eligibility be determined prior to random assignment to the research sample. Many applicants did not complete this process, have the right documents, or for other reasons were disqualified.

At one site, the ratio of applicants to youths randomly assigned was as high as 6 to 1.

Figure 6.1 presents data gathered by SDA staff involved in the intake process for JTPA-funded youth programs in Corpus Christi, including the JOBSTART program, and shows the fall-off of youths at each step in the process. In this funnel, the stream of recruited youths narrows as some are lost or eliminated along the way. Although the number and order of steps and the proportions of youths dropping off at each stage vary by site, the process is the same in all JOBSTART programs.

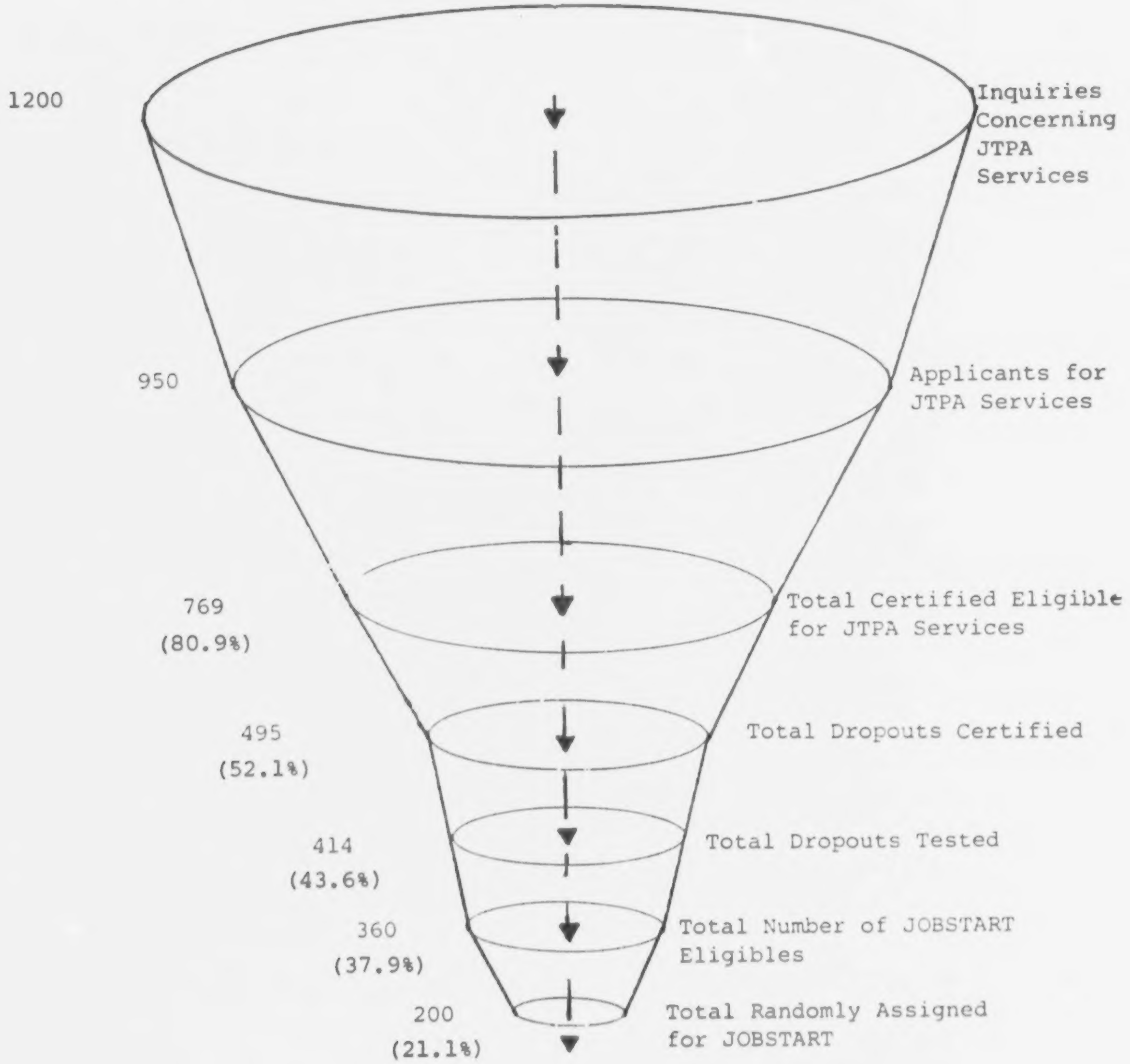
The youth fall-off is in some part due to a lack of appropriate documentation for JTPA certification, reading levels too low or too high for the youths to qualify for the program, and, simply, the youths' loss of interest in participating. The funnel steps are discussed below.

1. Eligibility Determination

The JOBSTART program guidelines specify that youths enrolled in the demonstration be educationally and economically disadvantaged dropouts between 17 and 21 years of age who lack a GED or high school diploma. Dropout status is defined according to the accepted local standard. For example, in Milwaukee, youths had to provide a letter from the public school system verifying that they had left school. In general, the criterion for educational disadvantage was reading competency below the eighth-grade level as established by a standardized, nationally-accepted test.[9] This level frequently serves as the entry requirement for skills training classes. Because a variety of standardized tests were used to establish eligibility, experimentals were retested shortly after program

FIGURE 6.1

INTAKE FLOW IN THE CORPUS CHRISTI JOBSTART PROGRAM


1200
Inquiries Concerning JTPA Services
950
Applicants for JTPA Services
769 (80.9%)
Total Certified Eligible for JTPA Services
495 (52.1%)
Total Dropouts Certified
414 (43.6%)
Total Dropouts Tested
360 (37.9%)
Total Number of JOBSTART Eligibles
200 (21.1%)
Total Randomly Assigned for JOBSTART

SOURCE: Tabulations from the records of the Corpus Christi SDA.

NOTE: Percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total number of applicants for JTPA services.

entry using a uniform baseline instrument, the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).[10] An additional reason for administering the TABE after program entry was that reading tests were not included in the eligibility determination process at a few sites.[11]

Economic disadvantage was defined by the standards for eligibility for services under JTPA.[12] Youths also have to meet any other reasonable criteria established by program operators -- such as indicating an interest in participating in both occupational training and educational services.

Screening takes place during interviews by JOBSTART staff members conducted as part of the intake process. In these interviews, staff members talk to applicants for 10 to 15 minutes to explore the youths' interests and to identify any issues that have to be resolved before program participation (such as child care or a court appearance). Staff also explain that, because JOBSTART is a demonstration, participants will be selected through a process that resembles a lottery. (Most sites have not tried to explain this in mass advertising materials designed for outreach.) In general, this applicant screening resulted in only modest fall-off.

However, program operators that receive funding under JTPA have to also ensure that their enrollees meet JTPA age, income and residency eligibility standards, and applicants at the Job Corps sites must also meet Job Corps eligibility criteria.[13] A great deal of applicant fall-off occurred during determination of whether these criteria were met. As seen in Figure 6.1, 81 percent of the applicants in Corpus Christi appeared eligible for JTPA services. Only 52 percent were dropouts who came through the whole eligibility determination process and were certified as eligible for JTPA services.

The SDA held responsibility for determining eligibility for JTPA. In some cases, youths went to the SDA office, but in others, SDA staff carried out the certification at the JOBSTART program offices. At some sites, the SDA delegated determination of JTPA eligibility to the program operator.

However JTPA eligibility is determined, documentation is required.[14] Although the JOBSTART operators and SDAs provide lists of required documents, applicants frequently appear for certification without all of them. Several appointments are sometimes scheduled before certification is completed, especially for youths whose parents are reluctant to help them provide the needed information or documents.

Substantial fall-off was also caused by the reading competency test. Quite a few of the tested youths are determined ineligible because they score above the eighth-grade level or below the levels used to establish eligibility at several of the sites.[15] Thirteen percent of the applicants tested in the Corpus Christi site had reading scores that disqualified them for JOBSTART. Although testing sessions are held frequently, as often as weekly, unless youths apply on the day testing is scheduled, they have to return. Many have several appointments, and some who are re-scheduled never show up. (See Table 6.2 for the staff responsibile for testing at different sites.)

At sites where the process was lengthy or involved, eligibility determination probably served as an unintended screening mechanism. Youths with little perseverance or capacity to organize their lives often simply stopped showing up. Thus, it is not surprising that enrollment proceeded slowly during the early phase of JOBSTART, given the attrition as well as the level of effort required to reach recruitment goals, discussed previously.

2. JOBSTART Enrollment

Once applicants met the JOBSTART criteria for age, reading competency and school status, and had been certified as eligible for JTPA services, they were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control groups. As indicated above, applicants for JOBSTART had heard about a selection process comparable to a lottery, usually at the time of their first interview with program or SDA staff when their eligibility status may not have been clear. Once eligibility was determined, however, the discussion of random assignment was extensive and included going over a formal informed consent form before obtaining the youth's signature. After the applicant agreed to random assignment and the research interviews, the JOBSTART Enrollment Form was filled out by program or SDA staff, using information provided by the youth.

A phone call was then made to MDRC, where random assignment was conducted. Youths entering the experimental group were told to report to classes or, in the case of some of the JOBSTART programs, to an orientation session. Applicants assigned to the control group were reminded that they were part of the research and would be contacted later; they were also told that they could seek services elsewhere on their own.

C. Description of the JOBSTART Research Sample

Table 6.4 shows the characteristics of youths who were randomly assigned in the first 12 months of program operations. As expected, they are a very disadvantaged group.

TABLE 6.4

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOBSTART RESEARCH SAMPLE AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT, BY SITE (AUGUST 1985 - JULY 1986 SAMPLE)

Characteristic	Allentown	C.E.T.	Chicago Commons	Connelly	CREC	East L.A.	EGOS	El Centro	Phoenix Job Corps	SER-Corpus Christi	SER-Milwaukee	Stanly Tech	Total
Age (%)													
16-17	36.4	27.1	6.3	9.0	28.6	30.4	26.1	26.9	47.6	26.0	27.3	30.2	23.8
18	18.2	30.2	31.3	19.3	25.7	26.1	21.7	32.7	9.5	27.5	36.4	30.2	25.7
19	18.2	18.6	25.0	24.1	20.0	17.4	24.6	23.1	19.0	16.5	18.2	17.0	20.1
20	18.2	13.5	31.3	29.0	8.6	17.4	18.8	11.5	14.3	13.5	0.0	9.4	16.8
21	9.1	10.4	6.3	18.6	17.1	8.7	8.7	5.8	9.5	16.5	18.2	13.2	13.7
Average Age (Years)	18.5	18.5	19.0	19.3	18.6	18.5	18.6	18.4	18.3	18.7	18.4	18.5	18.7
Sex (%)													
Male	9.1	54.6	43.8	44.8	37.1	65.2	36.8	40.4	38.1	63.0	45.5	47.2	49.7
Female	90.9	45.4	56.3	55.2	62.9	34.8	63.2	59.6	61.9	37.0	54.5	52.8	50.3
Ethnicity (%)													
White	27.3	13.4	0.0	7.6	8.6	0.0	13.0	1.9	14.3	9.0	27.3	41.5	11.7
Black	72.7	6.2	75.0	92.4	48.6	4.3	33.3	67.3	4.8	6.5	54.5	58.5	39.2
Hispanic	0.0	70.1	25.0	0.0	42.9	91.3	53.6	30.8	66.7	84.0	18.2	0.0	47.1
Other	0.0	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.0
Marital Status (%)													
Never Married	100.0	92.8	100.0	97.9	91.4	100.0	91.3	86.5	76.2	74.0	100.0	90.6	88.0
Married, Living with Spouse	0.0	5.2	0.0	1.4	8.6	0.0	5.8	5.8	0.0	19.5	0.0	1.9	7.8
Married, Not Living with Spouse	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.9	7.7	23.8	4.5	0.0	7.5	3.5
Divorced/Widowed	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Sample Size	11	97	16	145	35	23	69	52	21	200	11	53	733

(continued)

TABLE 8.4 (continued)

Characteristic	Allen-town	C.E.T.	Chicago Commons	Connelly	CREC	East L.A.	EGOS	El Centro	Phoenix Job Corps	SER-Corpus Christi	SER-Milwau-kee	Stanly Tech	Total
School Grade at Time of Dropout (%)													
5-8	0.0	5.4	0.0	2.8	2.9	8.7	4.3	9.6	14.3	17.5	9.1	11.3	8.9
9	18.2	16.3	6.3	23.6	37.1	17.4	14.5	36.5	23.8	25.0	36.4	20.8	23.1
10	45.5	17.4	43.8	44.4	31.4	34.8	42.0	23.1	33.3	30.0	18.2	22.6	32.0
11	36.4	50.0	37.5	26.4	22.9	39.1	30.4	19.2	19.0	25.0	27.3	37.7	30.1
12	0.0	10.9	12.5	2.8	5.7	0.0	8.7	11.5	9.5	2.5	9.1	7.5	5.8
Average Grade at Time of Dropout	10.2	10.4	10.6	10.0	9.9	10.0	10.2	9.8	9.9	9.7	9.9	10.1	10.0
Last Year in School (%)													
1977-1979	0.0	2.1	0.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	1.9	1.9
1980	0.0	4.2	0.0	2.1	2.9	0.0	2.9	2.0	4.8	4.0	0.0	5.7	3.2
1981	0.0	3.1	6.3	13.3	5.7	0.0	10.1	3.9	23.8	11.0	9.1	7.5	9.1
1982	9.1	10.4	31.3	17.5	5.7	0.0	4.3	13.7	9.5	14.0	0.0	5.7	11.8
1983	27.3	12.5	18.8	35.0	11.4	13.0	20.3	11.8	9.5	21.0	9.1	13.2	20.2
1984	9.1	21.9	18.8	16.8	17.1	21.7	23.2	29.4	19.0	25.5	27.3	24.5	22.2
1985	27.3	29.2	18.8	11.2	31.4	39.1	33.3	21.6	14.3	21.5	54.5	34.0	23.9
1986	27.3	16.7	6.3	0.0	25.7	26.1	5.8	17.6	19.0	0.5	0.0	7.5	7.8
Reason for Eligibility													
Receiving Welfare	72.7	2.1	62.5	62.1	57.1	26.1	30.4	21.2	28.6	20.0	18.2	11.3	30.4
70% BLS Standard	18.2	87.4	31.3	33.8	28.6	65.2	42.0	76.9	66.7	72.5	27.3	79.2	59.8
JTPA Eligible	0.0	0.0	6.3	2.1	2.9	8.7	26.1	1.9	4.8	7.5	9.1	3.8	6.2
Other	9.1	10.5	0.0	2.1	11.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.5	5.7	3.7
Number of Children (%)													
0	54.5	90.7	50.0	55.9	65.7	87.0	53.6	65.4	47.6	69.0	54.5	66.0	66.3
1	27.3	6.2	43.8	30.3	28.6	8.7	40.6	23.1	28.6	24.5	36.4	22.6	25.0
2	18.2	3.1	6.3	11.7	5.7	4.3	5.8	7.7	9.5	6.0	0.0	7.5	7.1
3 or more	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	14.3	0.5	9.1	3.8	1.6
Average Number of Children	0.64	0.12	0.56	0.60	0.40	0.17	0.52	0.52	1.00	0.38	0.64	0.51	0.45
Sample Size	11	97	16	145	35	23	69	52	21	200	11	53	733

(continued)

TABLE 6.4 (continued)

Characteristic	Allentown	C.E.T.	Chicago Commons	Connelly	CREC	East L.A.	EGOS	El Centro	Phoenix Job Corps	SER-Corpus Christi	SER-Milwaukee	Stanly Tech	Total
Current Living Situation (%)													
Own Household	45.5	4.1	12.5	18.6	20.0	4.3	18.8	3.8	9.5	11.0	27.3	9.4	12.7
One Parent	36.4	33.0	31.3	55.2	37.1	30.4	44.9	55.8	23.8	28.5	54.5	47.2	40.1
Both Parents	18.2	20.6	12.5	10.3	14.3	39.1	15.9	15.4	33.3	33.0	9.1	28.3	22.0
Friends/Relatives	0.0	41.2	37.5	13.1	22.9	21.7	20.3	25.0	33.3	27.0	9.1	15.1	23.9
Other	0.0	1.0	6.3	2.8	5.7	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.4
Prior Employment (%)[a]													
Unsubsidized:													
Full-Time	9.1	42.3	6.3	6.9	31.4	30.4	33.3	36.5	28.6	44.5	18.2	39.6	31.5
Part-Time	27.3	19.6	12.5	13.1	29.4	27.3	29.0	15.4	19.0	24.0	36.4	18.9	20.9
Subsidized	9.1	3.1	0.0	62.8	8.6	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	8.0	9.1	7.5	16.5
None	54.5	44.3	81.3	27.6	40.0	47.8	40.6	50.0	57.1	32.0	45.5	37.7	38.5
Benefits Received (%)[a]													
AFDC (own case)	45.5	5.2	50.0	33.8	25.7	13.0	29.0	19.2	19.0	12.0	18.2	15.1	20.1
AFDC (other household case)	27.3	10.8	12.5	33.8	14.7	4.3	11.6	26.9	19.0	4.6	18.2	15.4	15.8
General Assistance or Home Relief	0.0	2.1	6.3	14.9	11.4	4.3	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	4.4
Medicaid	72.7	12.4	18.8	26.4	45.7	17.4	33.3	13.5	9.5	18.9	0.0	25.0	22.4
Food Stamps	72.7	9.3	56.3	69.7	37.1	17.4	42.0	7.7	33.3	28.1	54.5	28.9	35.6
UI Benefits	10.0	8.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
Housing Assistance	10.0	2.1	6.3	12.1	11.4	0.0	13.0	1.9	10.0	7.0	0.0	5.8	7.4
Other Cash Assistance	0.0	4.1	6.3	8.1	25.7	26.1	14.5	15.4	5.0	7.5	9.1	5.8	9.8
None	18.2	67.0	25.0	13.1	20.0	52.2	37.7	48.1	42.9	53.0	45.5	50.9	41.9
Prior Occupational Training (%)[a]													
School	27.3	8.2	6.3	24.1	5.7	26.1	18.8	15.4	4.8	21.0	27.3	11.3	17.5
Job Corps	0.0	2.1	0.0	25.5	0.0	0.0	4.3	1.9	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	7.0
Other	9.1	2.1	12.5	8.3	11.4	8.7	1.4	0.0	9.5	6.0	0.0	5.7	6.1
None	63.6	88.7	81.3	51.0	82.9	65.2	75.4	82.7	85.7	69.0	72.7	84.9	72.0
Sample Size[b]	11	97	16	145	35	23	69	52	21	200	11	53	733

(continued)

TABLE 6.4 (continued)

SOURCE: Calculations from the JOBSTART Enrollment Forms.

NOTES: Distributions may not add exactly to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

[a] Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because individuals could have had more than one kind of prior employment, could currently be receiving more than one type of benefit, or could have received prior occupational training from more than one source.

[b] For selected characteristics, sample sites may vary up to 18 sample points due to missing data.

The majority of the sample members are black or Hispanic. The average age is 19. Only slightly more than one-third had reached or completed the eleventh-grade before dropping out. On average, sample members ended their schooling as tenth-graders. Two-thirds of the sample had been out of school for at least eight months when random assignment began in 1985. At program entry, the average grade level for reading was 6.8. (See Table 6.5, which provides the distribution of reading scores for members of the experimental group from a uniform baseline instrument.)

Sample members had had little opportunity to learn marketable skills, to understand employers' expectations, or to realize how the labor market functions. Over 70 percent of the youths randomly assigned through July 1986 had had no prior vocational training. Approximately 39 percent had never held a regular or even a subsidized job.

Although one-third of the members of the sample have children, most have never married. Over 60 percent were living with at least one parent when they entered the program. The majority of youths (58 percent) received some sort of government assistance -- cash or in-kind -- either directly in their own name, as in the case of General Assistance, or as part of a family unit that receives benefits under a government-sponsored program. Approximately 20 percent received payments from the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in their own name.

Table 6.6, which divides the sample into young men and women, reveals interesting differences in ethnicity, marital status, number of children, receipt of AFDC and related benefits, vocational training and work experience. More women than men in the sample were black (44 percent and 34 percent, respectively), whereas fewer of the women than the men were

TABLE 6.5

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TABE READING GRADE LEVEL FOR JOBSTART EXPERIMENTALS BY SITE (AUGUST 1985 - JULY 1986 SAMPLE)

Grade Level	Allentown	CET	Chicago Commons	Connelley	CREC	East L.A.	EGOS	El Centro	Phoenix Job Corps	SER-Corpus Christi	SER-Milwaukee	Stanly Tech	Total
Grade Level (%)													
Less Than 4	0.0	9.7	0.0	4.4	0.0	9.1	0.0	16.7	0.0	2.2	0.0	4.8	4.1
4-5	0.0	3.2	0.0	22.1	25.0	9.1	11.8	16.7	10.0	6.6	0.0	19.0	12.3
5-6	0.0	12.9	25.0	11.8	56.3	18.2	23.5	16.7	10.0	18.7	40.0	23.8	19.3
6-7	33.3	6.5	0.0	26.5	12.5	27.3	23.5	22.2	10.0	24.2	40.0	28.6	21.8
7-8	33.3	16.1	75.0	14.7	6.3	36.4	35.3	27.8	50.0	19.8	20.0	14.3	22.5
8-9	0.0	19.4	0.0	10.3	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	10.0	18.7	0.0	4.8	10.8
9-10	0.0	19.4	0.0	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	9.9	0.0	0.0	7.3
Greater Than 10	33.3	12.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	1.9
Average Reading Grade Level	8.0	8.0	7.0	6.6	5.5	6.2	6.5	5.8	7.1	7.1	6.1	6.3	6.8
Sample Size	3	31	8	68	16	11	34	18	10	91	5	21	316

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the initial TABE test.

NOTES: Only experimentals who were administered the TABE test are included in this table.

TABLE 6.6

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOBSTART RESEARCH SAMPLE AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT, BY SEX (AUGUST 1985 - JUNE 1986 SAMPLE)

Characteristic	Male	Female	Total
Research Group (%)			
Control	48.9	50.5	49.7
Experimental	51.1	49.5	50.3
Age (%)			
16-17	23.7	23.9	23.8
18	27.3	24.2	25.7
19	18.2	21.7	20.0
20	17.4	16.3	16.8
21	13.5	13.9	13.7
Average Age (Years)	18.7	18.7	18.7
Ethnicity (%)			
White	10.4	12.8	11.6
Black	34.3	44.0	39.2
Hispanic	52.5	41.8	47.1
Other	2.7	1.4	2.0
Marital Status (%)			
Never Married	91.2	85.1	88.1
Married, Living with Spouse	8.2	7.1	7.7
Married, Not Living with Spouse	0.3	6.8	3.6
Divorced, Widowed	0.3	1.1	0.7
School Grade at Time of Dropout (%)			
5-8	10.5	7.4	9.0
9	20.8	25.5	23.1
10	32.1	31.8	32.0
11	31.0	29.3	30.2
12	5.5	6.0	5.8
Average Grade at Time of Dropout	10.0	10.0	10.0
Last Year in School (%)			
1977-1979	1.9	1.9	1.9
1980	1.1	5.2	3.2
1981	6.4	11.7	9.1
1982	11.3	12.3	11.8
1983	19.9	20.2	20.1
1984	23.8	20.8	22.3
1985	26.8	21.0	23.9
1986	8.8	6.8	7.8

(continued)

TABLE 6.6 (continued)

Characteristic	Male	Female	Total
Reason for Eligibility (%)			
Receiving Welfare	16.3	44.1	30.3
70% BLS Standard	70.8	49.0	59.9
JTPA Eligible	8.3	4.1	6.2
Other	4.7	2.7	3.7
Number of Children (%)			
0	85.7	47.3	66.4
1	12.4	37.2	24.9
2	1.6	12.5	7.1
3 or More	0.3	3.0	1.6
Average Number of Children	0.2	0.7	0.4
Current Living Situation (%)			
Own Household	4.1	21.2	12.7
One Parent	43.4	37.0	40.2
Both Parents	28.8	15.2	22.0
Friends/Relatives	21.7	25.8	23.8
Other	1.9	0.8	1.4
Prior Employment (%)[a]			
Unsubsidized:			
Full-Time	42.0	21.2	31.6
Part-Time	25.3	16.7	21.0
Subsidized	15.1	17.9	16.5
None	27.5	49.2	38.4
Benefits Received (%)[a]			
AFDC (own case)	4.1	35.6	19.9
AFDC (other household case)	14.8	17.0	15.9
General Assistance or Home Relief	5.0	3.8	4.4
Medicaid	12.6	31.8	22.3
Food Stamps	26.7	44.1	35.5
UI Benefits	2.5	1.4	1.9
Housing Assistance	5.9	8.9	7.4
Other Cash Assistance	11.3	7.9	9.6
None	51.6	32.3	41.9
Prior Occupational Training (%)[a]			
School	22.5	12.5	17.5
Jobs Corps	8.5	5.4	7.0
Other	6.6	5.7	6.1
None	66.8	77.2	72.0
Sample Size[b]	364	368	732

(continued)

TABLE 6.6 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the JOBSTART Enrollment Forms.

NOTES: Distributions may not add exactly to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

[a] Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because individuals could have had more than one kind of prior employment, could currently be receiving more than one type of benefit or could have received prior occupational training from more than one source.

[b] Sample sizes may vary up to 18 sample points for selected characteristics due to missing data.

Hispanic (42 percent and 53 percent, respectively). Somewhat more men than women had never married (91 percent versus 85 percent) and the men were far less likely to be parents. More than 50 percent of the women had at least one child as compared to less than 15 percent of the men. Approximately 36 percent of the women had their own AFDC case compared to 4 percent of the men, and substantially more indicated that they lived in households receiving Food Stamps.

Although neither the young men nor the women were well prepared for jobs, the women were even less prepared than the men. Although similar to men in the grade in which they had dropped out -- on average, the tenth grade -- the women were less likely to have had vocational training while in school. Slightly more than three-quarters of the women had never had any training as compared to two-thirds of the men. More women than men had never held a job -- almost half of the women compared to slightly over one-quarter of the men.

D. Factors Influencing Recruitment Outcomes in the Early Implementation Stages of the Demonstration

As discussed above, staff involved in outreach for the JOBSTART programs found that the process of recruitment and enrollment took longer than anticipated. The need to develop and maintain a flow of eligible applicants and to randomly assign an adequate number of youths to the research sample was a major challenge in the start-up period. In addition to attrition, several factors appear to have affected the pace of these activities.

First, as discussed earlier, some of the JOBSTART operators were known in their areas as providers of training to adults. They consequently were more experienced in recruiting that population. These operators had to change their images in these communities and let it be known that, through JOBSTART, they were going to be providing services for young dropouts. It took time to get that message across. One program operator, CREC in Hartford, also had to reach out to a new community -- in this case a new neighborhood and ethnic group -- when it moved from an area in which it had established a solid reputation.

Second, in some cases, limited outreach and recruitment strategies, as well as staff time, help explain the slow pace of enrollment. JOBSTART sites with rolling enrollment have found it particularly difficult to gauge the effort required to maintain an appropriate flow of applicants. It has even been difficult to determine the appropriate number of applicants, since the attrition rate was so high between application and random assignment.

A third issue -- commitment to the JOBSTART program -- is related to staff resources. Because relatively few people worked on recruitment, less than full commitment on the part of even one recruiter -- or a key staff person in the SDA or other referral agency -- could reduce applications. Although this was rarely a problem, when it did occur, it was often related to a new program procedure, such as random assignment. In such cases, time was needed to develop an understanding of what was required from staff.

In addition, the site at which the JOBSTART program operates appears to influence recruitment. Where a number of youth programs operate simultaneously -- as, for example, in Milwaukee -- recruitment in JOBSTART is somewhat more difficult and therefore takes longer. While JOBSTART has distinctive features, it takes time for the youths to distinguish JOBSTART from other available options.

According to staff, the condition of the labor market also affected the amount of time and effort required to meet recruitment goals. Some youths reportedly decided not to apply to JOBSTART in order to take jobs in areas with strong labor markets. In contrast, labor markets with fairly high unemployment rates may discourage youths from participating in JOBSTART for another reason; lacking accurate information, they feel they will not find jobs even at the completion of JOBSTART's training.

In summary, an examination of the experience of JOBSTART sites thus far reveals that intake has generally been slower than originally envisioned. Most of the program operators underestimated the time and level of effort that would be required to recruit sufficient numbers of dropouts who read below the eighth-grade level. Although qualitative data suggest that some program operators have been less resourceful and conscientious than others in disseminating information about JOBSTART, the somewhat protracted enrollment schedule in JOBSTART cannot be completely attributed to insufficient efforts.

Rather, recruiting a minimum of 200 youths who will meet JOBSTART's narrow eligibility criteria is difficult and will involve contacting a much larger number of youths than will ever eventually enroll. As this chapter has shown, although a fairly large number of youths are interested in and apply for the program, at many sites the ratio of recruited youths to actual random assignments appears to be as high as 6 to 1. Thus, the level of enrollment in JOBSTART at this early point should not be taken as a statement of a lack of interest on the part of youths who hear about the program.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SITE PROFILES

ALLENTOWN/A.B.L.E.Y. YOUTH SERVICES CONSORTIUM: Buffalo, New York

The Allentown/A.B.L.E.Y. Youth Services Consortium has provided employment services to youths since 1974. Allentown operated the first CETA program in Buffalo and remains the area's largest contractor for JTPA-funded youth programs, serving about 400 youths annually. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of those served are dropouts. Allentown offers in-house educational, employability development and direct placement services as well as counseling and other training-related support services. The Center subcontracts with occupational training vendors including colleges, proprietary schools and private, nonprofit organizations. In June 1985, Allentown became a Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) Learning Center site. The computer-assisted CCP curriculum, also used at three other JOBSTART sites, provides self-paced, competency-based instruction on an open-entry/open-exit basis.

Allentown began random assignment of youths into JOBSTART in June 1986. JOBSTART students receive a minimum of 15 hours per week of academic instruction in addition to individual and group counseling and other program support, including career exploration assistance, needs-based payments, transportation assistance and job survival skills training. Daycare and mental health services are available through a referral network.

Allentown operates a sequential JOBSTART program. Participants upgrade their basic skills until they meet the entry requirements of an occupational skills training course in the career area that they have selected under the guidance of Allentown staff. However, depending upon needs and circumstances, academic and vocational instruction can be offered concurrently to some participants.

JOBSTART at Allentown is paid for by JTPA Title IIA funds allocated through the local JTPA agency and by JTPA 8 percent set-aside funds awarded through the State Education and Employment Demonstrations (SEED) program of the Department of Education of New York State.

THE BASIC SKILLS ACADEMY: New York, New York

The Basic Skills Academy is a private, nonprofit alternative education program with a national reputation for providing effective basic academic and world-of-work training to approximately 400 disadvantaged high school dropouts from the five boroughs of New York City each year.

The BSA began operating a pilot phase of JOBSTART during the fall and winter of 1985-1986 under a contract with the New York City Private

Industry Council. Under different funding arrangements, the BSA entered the full demonstration when it began random assignment in October 1986. Formerly part of the Division of Community Services of the Bank Street College of Education, the BSA moved to new quarters in mid-August 1986 and now operates under the auspices of the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC). Although privately incorporated, the LAC is part of the Mayor's Office of Youth Services. Under the LAC, the Academy operates JOBSTART as its single program service. The educational component features the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) curriculum, described in the profile of the Allentown site. Occupational skills training slots for the BSA's sequential JOBSTART program will be provided by the New York City Department of Employment skills training contractors.

The Mayor's Office of Youth Services provides funding for JOBSTART as well as managerial oversight. Additional funding is provided through the SEED program of the New York State Department of Education. The Chase Manhattan Bank is the corporate sponsor for JOBSTART at the BSA.

CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT TRAINING: San Jose, California

Part of a federation of centers located in six western states, the San Jose Center for Employment Training (CET) is the largest and has 20 years of operating experience. CET programs are targeted to a high-risk population composed predominantly of Chicanos and migrant workers. Thirty percent of the 775 enrollees are youths. Most of these youths are eligible for JOBSTART. CET began to participate in the demonstration in November 1985.

The major focus of the CET program offered to JOBSTART participants is occupational skills training for such positions as electronic technician, auto mechanic, and secretary. Basic skills instruction is tailored to each occupational area and integrated into the total training program which is individualized in approach. English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED instruction run concurrently with skills training when appropriate. CET also operates a Montessori school with developmental child care which is open to the children of JOBSTART enrollees.

Support for the JOBSTART program comes from CET's diversified funding base which includes state 8 percent educational set-aside funds from the California State Job Training Coordinating Council and JTPA Title IIA funding awarded by the local SDA. The state 8 percent educational set-aside funds, totalling $50,000, have been used to support a full-time coordinator position and to augment support services.

CHICAGO COMMONS ASSOCIATION INDUSTRIAL and BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAM: Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago Commons Association is a private, nonprofit, community-based organization with a 90-year history of providing a variety of services, including job training, delinquency prevention and community energy conservation programs to residents in low-income neighborhoods of Chicago. Approximately 20,000 people are served annually through the Association's five social service centers.

Chicago Commons' Industrial and Business Training Program offers job training in high-demand occupations through intensive 6- to 9-month classes in industrial and clerical areas for positions such as automatic screw machine operators, plastic injection mold setters, packaging machinery mechanics, industrial inspectors and word processors. In consultation with employers, curricula are developed and modified as the employers' needs change. Training at Chicago Commons combines competency-based instruction with hands-on experience. Instruction in basic academic skills is tailored to each occupational area and integrated into the occupational skills curricula.

Since training programs at Chicago Commons were designed primarily for adults, Chicago Commons agreed to make adaptations to serve JOBSTART-eligible youths. JOBSTART participants are provided with special counseling, work maturity workshops and 10 additional hours of academic instruction each week. In addition, JOBSTART participants -- as well as other enrollees at Chicago Commons -- receive need-based payments and other support services available through the JTPA system. Random assignment to JOBSTART began in March 1986.

Funding for JOBSTART comes from both the city and state JTPA systems. The Mayor's Office of Employment and Training is paying for the skills training. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) is providing $114,000 of JTPA 8 percent funds for counseling and support services.

CONNELLEY SKILL LEARNING CENTER: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Connelley Skill Learning Center is Pittsburgh's Area Vocational Technical School (AVTS), a division of the Pittsburgh Public School System. The Center serves approximately 1,000 people per year including adults and in-school youths as well as young high school dropouts. To be eligible to attend Connelley, one must be at least 17 1/2 years old and a Pittsburgh resident. Connelley provides occupational skills training in 28 fields as well as basic education and GED preparation. The Adult Basic Education staff supplement traditional classroom approaches with computer-assisted instruction using Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) materials. Tutorial assistance is also available.

When JOBSTART random assignment began in August 1985, Connelley became the first operational site in the demonstration. Each day, participants combine four hours of vocational instruction with two hours of academic instruction. JOBSTART participants have enrolled in 16 of Connelley's 28 skill areas, including data entry, clerical skills, electrical occupations, auto technology, plumbing and masonry.

An ad-hoc advisory committee composed of representatives from the school, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), the Private Industry Council and the City of Pittsburgh as well as community-based organizations has worked to develop the JOBSTART program in Pittsburgh. The committee also developed a mentoring component in which local employers are matched with JOBSTART students who are training in similar occupational fields.

ACCD has also been instrumental in providing and helping to raise private funds for incentive payments tied to attendance and performance. JOBSTART operating costs are paid for by 8 percent education linkage funds from JTPA as well as funding from the State Department of Education and the Pittsburgh Board of Education.

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL (CREC): Hartford, Connecticut

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) in Hartford was created in 1981 in response to the city's burgeoning dropout problem, estimated to be close to 50 percent. CREC serves local school districts by brokering services to encourage and develop cooperative educational programs. Its Work and Learn Center, where JOBSTART is run, provides 17- to 21-year old economically disadvantaged high school dropouts with academic remediation, pre-employment training and work internships. The Center serves about 325 students each year.

The JOBSTART program at CREC is sequential with basic educational instruction preceding occupational skills training. Occupational skills training is provided through an arrangement with local training vendors and employers, including the Connecticut National Bank, the Hartford College for Women, the Urban League and the Greater Hartford Community College. Between the educational and occupational components, JOBSTART participants may enter short-term internships to gain work experience in their skill area. CREC began to integrate the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) into its academic remediation program shortly before JOBSTART random assignment began in April 1986.

CREC meets its JOBSTART budget using several sources, including locally awarded JTPA Title IIA funding as well as funds from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and from Jobs for Connecticut Youth. The Aetna Life and Casualty Foundation provides corporate support for Hartford's JOBSTART site.

EAST LOS ANGELES SKILLS CENTER: Monterey Park, California

The East Los Angeles Skills Center is one of six skills training centers operating under the direction of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Division of Adult and Occupational Education. Founded in 1966, it is located in a predominantly Hispanic area seven miles from downtown Los Angeles. Each year the Center provides educational and occupational training services to approximately 500 students, 200 of whom are economically disadvantaged youths. The Center operates on an open-entry/exit basis.

JOBSTART random assignment began in May 1986. Once assessed by a counselor, JOBSTART participants follow an individualized skills training and educational plan that guides them through the Center's pre-employment, work maturity, basic education and vocational curricula. Occupational skills training and basic education instruction occur simultaneously. Enrollees can receive skills training in office occupations, auto and diesel mechanics, VCR installation and repair, industrial machine operations, and other occupations in high demand in the labor market. All skills training is competency-based in approach.

The academic component features a Los Angeles School District Learning Laboratory with GED preparation and high school diploma sequences. English as a Second Language is offered for those who need it. Supplementing the educational curricula is a support service system that provides child care, transportation, counseling, and, in some cases, meals and financial assistance.

The bulk of the Center's funding comes from public sources, most notably the Los Angeles Unified School District, which also provides in-kind support. JOBSTART receives locally awarded JTPA 8 percent funds and 8 percent funds awarded directly through the state. The Atlantic Richfield Foundation is the corporate sponsor for the Center.

EL CENTRO COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOB TRAINING CENTER: Dallas, Texas

The Job Training Center (JTC) of El Centro Community College is part of the Dallas County Community College District. The JTC has a history of targeting its employment training and educational services to economically disadvantaged youths and adults and serves over 500 people a year.

In March 1986, when random assignment began, the El Centro site became the second JOBSTART program in the State of Texas. Participants upgrade their academic skills in a program that provides individualized, competency-based instruction in mathematics, reading and writing, social studies and science. As soon as they are academically ready, students receive hands-on vocational/technical training in one of the following areas: accounting/ bookkeeping, air conditioning and refrigeration service, automotive service and repair, cable TV installation and technology, data entry and general office occupations. Individualized counseling is available throughout enrollment in JOBSTART. A Life Skills course covers a range of topics, including pre-employment skills, personal budgeting and sexuality.

The City of Dallas SDA supports skills training and the basic education component and provides needs-based payments for JOBSTART participants from its pool of JTPA 8 percent funds. The Texas Department of Community

Affairs committed an additional $125,000 of JTPA 8 percent funds. The Dallas Community College District is making sizeable in-kind and cash contributions to JOBSTART, and the Atlantic Richfield Foundation is the corporate sponsor.

THE EMILY GRIFFITH OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL: Denver, Colorado

Located in downtown Denver, the Emily Griffith Opportunity School (EGOS) has served adults in the Denver metropolitan area since 1916. Under the supervision of the Division of Continuing Education and Manpower Training of the Denver Public Schools, EGOS offers training in over 350 subjects to over 15,000 students annually.

EGOS began operating JOBSTART in April 1986. JOBSTART participants receive academic instruction and occupational training concurrently. The basic math and reading programs are geared toward attainment of a GED or high school diploma. EGOS features individualized instruction, and all program areas are open-entry/exit.

Sixty community advisory committees, comprised of representatives from over 500 Colorado firms, meet regularly to review and improve vocational curricula at EGOS. The occupational skills training areas available to JOBSTART youths include: food management and production, auto body repair and auto mechanics, business data programming, electronics technology, refrigeration/heating maintenance and secretarial skills. JOBSTART participants also receive individual and group counseling, work readiness and life skills training, and transportation and child-care payments.

The collaborative effort to fund JOBSTART involves several state and local agencies, including the Denver Employment and Training Administration, the Governor's Jobs Training Office, the Denver Public Schools, and the American Telephone and Telegraph Foundation.

SER-JOBS FOR PROGRESS, INC: Corpus Christi, Texas

The SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. affiliate in Corpus Christi has been providing skills training since 1965. In May 1985, the City of Corpus Christi awarded SER a JTPA contract to provide remedial education and vocational skills training in high demand occupations to high school dropouts and poorly-performing high school graduates. The local initiative became part of the JOBSTART demonstration in October 1985 when random assignment began. Additional funding is provided through the Texas Department of Community Affairs, which awarded $128,000 to SER out of the JTPA 8 percent funds reserved for coordination with education programs.

Educational instruction and skills training are run concurrently at SER. The educational program incorporates computerized instruction (using the PLATO system) as well as pencil and paper exercises. Training is offered for positions as typists and account clerks as well as in auto mechanics and auto body paint and repair. Support services include needs-based payments, individualized counseling, child care provided at another SER facility, and incentive awards based on academic performance. More specialized social services can be arranged through referral to other community agencies. The Texas Employment Commission has responsibility for job development and placement.

SER-JOBS FOR PROGRESS: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Milwaukee affiliate of the national SER-Jobs for Progress program was organized in 1973 to serve the city's growing Hispanic population. Although the agency's primary focus is the Hispanic community, services are provided to a broad-based constituency including blacks, Asians and whites.

SER currently provides basic skills instruction, training in English as a Second Language, counseling and direct placement to youths and adults as well as tryout employment, vocational skills training and child-care services.

At SER, the two major components of the JOBSTART model, education and skills training, are delivered sequentially. SER first enrolls JOBSTART participants in its basic academic skills or GED preparation classes, both of which utilize the computer-assisted Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP). Participants who pass the GED exam or raise their basic skills to a level that meets the entry requirements of skills training courses then enter vocational training. Courses in clerical occupations (receptionist, clerk/typist and word processing) are available on-site at SER. In addition, an arrangement with the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) allows participants to enter courses in a wide variety of occupational areas.

Because SER operates on an open-entry/open-exit basis, youths eligible for JOBSTART are recruited and randomly assigned as slots become available in basic education or GED preparation classes. Random assignment began in April 1986.

Counselors meet with JOBSTART enrollees on a regular basis and are available to help youths cope with problems as they arise. SER is also able to provide part-time work experience positions to some JOBSTART participants as an incentive to regular attendance.

Funding for SER's JOBSTART program is provided through the agency's contract with the Milwaukee County Executive Office of Economic Resource Development, the JTPA administrative agent for the city.

STANLY TECHNICAL COLLEGE: Albemarle, North Carolina

Located 30 minutes east of Charlotte, Stanly Technical College is fully accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is one of the major recipients of JTPA funding from the Centralina Council of Governments and the Centralina Private Industry Council. JOBSTART random assignment began in November 1985.

JOBSTART participants are provided with human resources development (counseling, life skills and employability development), basic education (competency-based adult basic education, adult high school diploma and GED preparation) and occupational skills training. At Stanly Technical College, JOBSTART operates sequentially with the human resources development and educational programs preceding the occupational skills training. Training in electro-mechanical maintenance and electronic data entry are available to JOBSTART participants. The North Carolina Department of Labor has accredited the electro-mechanical training course as a Pre-Apprenticeship Training program. Through a system of individual referrals, youths interested in machinist, auto mechanics, welding and respiratory technician training can be accomodated in separately funded programs at Stanly Technical College. The PLATO computer-assisted education system was installed as an additional feature of the JOBSTART program.

JOBSTART's funding is a collaboration of JTPA and educational resources. The Centralina Council of Governments -- the JTPA administration entity -- funds the clerical and in-house occupational skills training and human resource development components through Title IIA of JTPA. The North Carolina Department of Community Colleges' award of over $90,000 of JTPA 8 percent education funds supports the electro-mechanical training. These funds are supplemented by state, federal and local educational revenues.

By mutual agreement with the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, Stanly Technical College withdrew from the research effort in the fall of 1986, largely because of difficulties associated with recruiting the required number of youths in a rural environment.

THE JOB CORPS SITES

The non-residential components of four Job Corps Centers participate in JOBSTART -- in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Sacramento. JOBSTART participants receive the same education, skills training and support services as other Job Corps enrollees, but do not reside at Job Corps Centers.

Shortly after enrollment, JOBSTART youths enter the Occupational Exploration Program (OEP) phase of the Job Corps program in which youths, with the assistance of a vocational counselor, sample the types of skills training offered by the Centers. At the completion of the OEP, JOBSTART youths are assigned to a particular skills area, which matches their abilities and interests. Both the education and occupational skills training components are open-entry/open-exit and self-paced. Education and skills training are organized according to an individualized plan.

JOBSTART participants also receive world-of-work and life skills instruction, and have access to Job Corps support services, such a day care and recreation facilities. They receive medical exams and medical and dental treatment, if needed. Graduated payments are given to participants who meet specified attendance and performance standards during their stay in the Job Corps.

Funding for the Job Corps comes from Title IVB of JTPA.

ATLANTA JOB CORPS: Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Job Corps, operated by the Management and Training Corporation, provides a mix of educational approaches including computer-assisted learning as well as traditional classroom methods. Vocational skills training prepares youths for entry into fields such as culinary arts, word processing, other clerical work, building maintenance and health. About half of the 191 non-residential slots of the Atlanta Job Corps will be used for JOBSTART youths. JOBSTART random assignment began in August 1986.

LOS ANGELES JOB CORPS CENTER: Los Angeles, California

Operated by the YWCA of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Job Corps Center is the fifth largest Job Corps Center in the nation and one of the oldest. Half of the 750 corpsmembers are non-residents and half are female. The Central downtown facility offers JOBSTART to non-residential Corps members as do three non-residential satellites in East Los Angeles, South Central Los Angeles and San Pedro. Random assignment to JOBSTART began in August 1986.

In Los Angeles, JOBSTART participants enroll in occupational skills training programs conducted by the Job Corps Center itself or may be referred to the public educational system in the community. On-site training programs include an extensive business education program as well as building maintenance, off-set printing, culinary arts, licensed vocational nursing and nursing assistance programs.

The American Telephone and Telegraph Foundation is the corporate sponsor for the Los Angeles JOBSTART program and is exploring training opportunities for youths in telemarketing.

PHOENIX JOB CORPS CENTER: Phoenix, Arizona

The Phoenix Job Corps Center is operated by the Teledyne Economic Development Corporation under contract to the U.S. Department of Labor. The Center has the capacity to serve over 400 youths, roughly equally divided between residential and non-residential components. Eligible applicants are recruited on an ongoing basis and enrolled as slots become available. Random assignment of non-residential Corps members to JOBSTART began in June 1986.

As at the other Job Corps sites, JOBSTART participants receive basic education instruction concurrently with occupational skills training. Occupational training at the Phoenix Center includes classes in building maintenance, retail sales, bookkeeping and electronics assembly. In addition, JOBSTART youths at the Phoenix site are eligible for union-sponsored courses that prepare trainees for pre-apprenticeships in the building trades.

The American Telephone and Telegraph Foundation is a corporate sponsor of the JOBSTART program at the Phoenix Job Corps Center.

SACRAMENTO JOB CORPS CENTER: Sacramento, California

The Sacramento Job Corps Center is operated by the Singer Educational Division of the Singer-Link Corporation. The Center serves approximately 275 residents and 120 non-residents per year. JOBSTART random assignment began in October 1986.

As at the other Job Corps sites, JOBSTART participants spend approximately two weeks in assessment and life skills groups in which they match their interests and aptitudes to vocational training options. Upon completion of the assessment phase, they begin vocational skills training and basic skills education; the amount of time devoted to each component depends on the level of competency in reading and computing skills.

At the Sacramento Job Corps Center, vocational training is offered in 26 areas including heavy equipment operations, landscape maintenance and engineering, surveying, medical transcription, home health aide, carpentry, auto body and fender repair, plastering, photo offset lithography, word processing, culinary arts and computer operations and repair. World-of-work and life skills instruction are also part of the preparation for jobs within the Job Corps.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. As of January 1987, 15 sites remain in the JOBSTART demonstration. By mutual agreement with the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, Stanly Technical College, located in Albemarle, North Carolina, withdrew from the research effort, largely because of the difficulties associated with recruiting the required number of youths in a rural environment.

2. Betsey et al., 1985, p. 24. CETA was the predecessor legislation to JTPA.

3. Hahn and Lerman, 1985, p. 97.

4. Betsey et al., 1985.

5. Job Training Longitudinal Survey Research Advisory Panel, 1985. This approach has subsequently been adopted by the Department of Labor in its planned evaluation of the JTPA system.

6. All data in this paragraph are drawn from U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986, pp. 5-13.

7. Hahn and Lerman, 1985, pp. 2-7.

8. Rees, 1986, Table 1, p. 615.

9. Levin, July 1985.

10. Sum et al., 1986.

11. National Alliance of Business, 1986, p. 2; and Hahn and Lerman, 1985, pp. 7-8.

12. Hahn and Lerman, 1985, p. 7.

13. Information provided on p. 6 of "Youth 2000: Challenge and Opportunity," a fact sheet prepared by the Hudson Institute for a conference of that title sponsored by the Department of Labor and the National Alliance of Business, June 10, 1986.

14. Sum et al., 1986, p. 3.

15. Betsey et al., 1985, p. 8.

16. Walker et al., 1985; and Cook et al., 1985.

17. Walker et al., 1985; and Cook et al., 1985.

18. The five sites are the EdCo Youth Alternative in Boston; BHRAGS (Brooklyn's Haitian Ralph and Good Shepherd) in Brooklyn; Bank Street Basic Skills Academy in New York City; the Connelley Skill Learning Center in Pittsburgh; and the Center for Employment Training in San Jose. The findings from the pilot phase are provided in Redmond, 1985.

19. Borus, 1984.

20. Betsey et al., 1985; and Hahn and Lerman, 1985.

21. Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1980.

22. Farkas et al., 1984.

23. Public/Private Ventures, 1983.

24. Mallar et al., 1982.

25. In this report, the term "remedial education" is used in a broad sense to indicate that a target population of poor readers is in need of or receiving some kind of instruction in basic education to bring them up to expected levels of attainment. It is not used in its more technical sense to refer specifically to educational programs geared to GED instruction for youths who have attained a 7.5 reading level.

26. Mallar et al., 1982.

27. Work experience is an allowable activity under JTPA, but unless certain conditions are met, the entire cost (including wage payments) is considered to be a participant support cost. No more than 30 percent -- and generally no more than 15 percent -- of program funds can be spent on support costs. Work experience can be billed to training under the following conditions: when it is limited to six months and when it is combined with classroom or other training.

28. Walker et al., 1985, p. 22.

CHAPTER 2

1. *Federal Register*, Vol. 51, No. 22, February 3, 1986, p. 4249.

2. The standards are published in U.S. Department of Labor, June 1986. The rates are based on the number of participants who have been terminated from the program, not the total number of enrollees.

3. See Chapter 1, Footnote 27.

4. Walker et al., 1985; Cook et al., 1985; and National Alliance of Business, 1985.

5. The findings from this survey conducted by the Brandeis University Center for Human Resources are reported in "What's Happening to Title II-A Funding?" in _Youth Programs_, Winter 1986, a newsletter published by The Center for Human Resources and the National Association of Private Industry Councils.

6. U.S. Department of Labor, May 1986, pp. 6-7.

7. U.S. General Accounting Office, 1985, p. 10. The study examined enrollees in service delivery areas that had also been prime sponsors under CETA.

8. The program year 1984-1985 standards are provided in _Federal Register_, Vol. 49, No. 22, February 1, 1984, p. 4054. Actual performance data are regularly updated by the Department of Labor. The performance data on program year 1984 included here were published by the National Alliance of Business in _Business Currents_, Technical Report No. 4, March 3, 1986, p. 1.

9. Walker et al., 1985, pp. 62-63.

10. U.S. Department of Labor, May 1986, Table B-1.

11. Grinker Associates, 1986, pp. vi-vii, 74-75.

12. Cook et al., 1985, Chapter 6, pp. 24-26; and Walker et al., 1985, p. 21.

13. Walker et al., 1985, p. 22.

14. Walker et al., 1985, pp. 22-23, 28.

15. U.S. General Accounting Office, 1985, p. 19.

16. Grinker Associates, 1986, pp. 66-68.

17. The JTPA performance standards are actually adjusted twice at the local level: once in the beginning of the program year for planning purposes, and again at the end of the year to take into account actual enrollments and demographic factors.

18. In a performance-based contract, full payment is contingent upon the attainment of specific performance objectives, such as enrollment levels, program completion rates, competency levels, placement rates and average entry wage rates. A

cost-reimbursement contract, in contrast, is not tied directly to specific outcomes and covers actual costs up to a maximum.

19. U.S. Department of Labor, June 1986; and National Association of Counties, 1986.

20. Grinker Associates, 1986, pp. 54-55, 62.

21. See, for example, National Association of Private Industry Councils, January 1986. A General Accounting Office study on the use of employment competency systems in JTPA is scheduled for release in early 1987.

22. An amendment to JTPA enacted in the fall of 1986 (P.L. 99-496) requires SDAs to establish a remedial education component in their Summer Youth Employment Program.

23. Grinker Associates, 1986, pp. 69-70.

CHAPTER 3

1. As explained in Footnote 1 of Chapter 1, as of January 1987, 15 sites remain in the JOBSTART demonstration.

2. The Basic Skills Academy operated JOBSTART as a pilot program with JTPA funding provided through the New York City PIC during the winter of 1985-1986. The full demonstration phase, which began in the fall of 1986, is operated without local JTPA funding, however. The reasons for this change are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

3. New York State Education Department, p. 2.

4. California State Job Training Coordinating Council, Youth Subcommittee, October 1985.

CHAPTER 4

1. Youths who enter skills training at the sequential sites are encouraged to continue in the education classes if staff feel that they would benefit from additional assistance.

2. Milwaukee SER offers one occupational training class on-site -- clerical training; the other sites have no training component on-site.

CHAPTER 5

1. CET in San Jose was offered separate entered employment rates for youth and adults, but preferred one overall rate in its contract with the County of Santa Clara.

2. This point is also discussed in Grinker Asociates, 1986, pp. 29-33, 40, and 117-119.

3. U.S. Department of Labor, June 1986, pp. H-3, H-10.

4. See, for example, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1980; Wolfhagen, 1983; Gueron, 1984; and Quint and Riccio, 1985.

5. Initially, performance-based contracts paid only for training that resulted in placement in a training-related job. A 1984 amendment to the JTPA legislation expanded the definition to apply as well to other activities that resulted in a youth's positive termination.

6. The New York City JTPA system does, however, earmark 8 percent monies for basic education programs which allow for a longer training cycle than that in the Basic Skills Academy's contract. Officials suggest that this would be a more appropriate source of funding for programs such as JOBSTART.

CHAPTER 6

1. A few program operators did not have extensive experience in recruiting youth target groups. Connelley Skill Learning Center, Corpus Christi SER, Emily Griffith Opportunity School, Chicago Commons, CET and Stanly Technical College traditionally have served more adults than youths. In addition, EGOS has generally developed recruitment campaigns only for special programs.

2. Betsey et al., 1985, p. 8.

3. Diaz et al., 1982, p. 47.

4. Diaz et al., 1982, p. 48.

5. Diaz et al., 1982, pp. 54-55.

6. See, for example, Walker et al., 1985.

7. U.S. Department of Labor, May 1986, Appendix Table C-3.

8. CET in San Jose and EGOS in Denver do frequently have waiting

lists for entry into particular skills training courses.

9. However, in order to eliminate fewer potential JOBSTART enrollees, the criterion for reading competency was made more flexible to allow up to 20 percent of the youths considered eligible for random assignment to demonstrate a level of reading competency between the eighth and ninth grade levels.

10. Reading competency levels as measured on the TABE may not be identical to levels obtained on other standardized tests used in the eligibility determination process.

11. The Job Corps Centers and the Center for Employment Training do not administer reading tests to applicants prior to random assignment.

12. Adults as well as youths participating in job training programs under Title II of JTPA (both Parts A and B) must be economically disadvantaged, defined by family income which in relation to family size is not in excess of the higher of either the poverty level established by the federal Office of Management and Budget or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level. Also considered economically disadvantaged are people receiving cash welfare payments under federal, state or local programs; Food Stamp recipients; foster children receiving state or local government cash support; and handicapped adults whose own income meets economically disadvantaged criteria but whose family income might not. Under Part A of Title II of JTPA -- but not Part B, which covers summer youth programs -- up to 10 percent of the participants may be considered eligible regardless of income if they face specified barriers to employment. Examples of such individuals include, but are not restricted to, those who have limited English language proficiency; displaced homemakers; school dropouts; teenage parents; handicapped older workers; veterans; offenders; alcoholics; and addicts. Applicants for regular JTPA youth programs must be 16 through 21 years of age.

13. The Job Corps income eligibility standards are the same as those establishing elibility for services under JTPA. In addition to meeting the income standard, applicants for the Job Corps must be 14 through 21 years of age. In order to participate in the Job Corps, young people must need the educational, training, or intensive counseling services as provided by the Job Corps in order to secure and hold jobs or to pursue further training and education through other institutions.

14. However, not all the program operators required that all individuals applying for JTPA services provide proof of

meeting each criterion. Some required that only a certain percentage of those certified as eligible provide documentation. The type of documentation required also may vary. For example, until the spring of 1986, the Dallas SDA required an original birth certificate as proof of age, although other SDAs accepted a variety of documentation.

15. Programs that established a lower boundary of reading competency in determining eligibility for JOBSTART services used competency at the fifth grade level as the eligibility "floor".

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